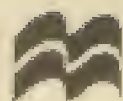


THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO THE COOLEST
NEW MONSTER GAME!

DIGIMON POWER

The Unauthorized Guide

Hank Schlesinger
Author of *Pokémon Fever*



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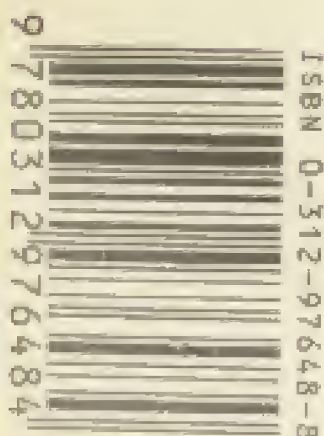
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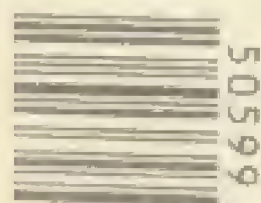
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DIGIMON POWER

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DIGIMON POWER

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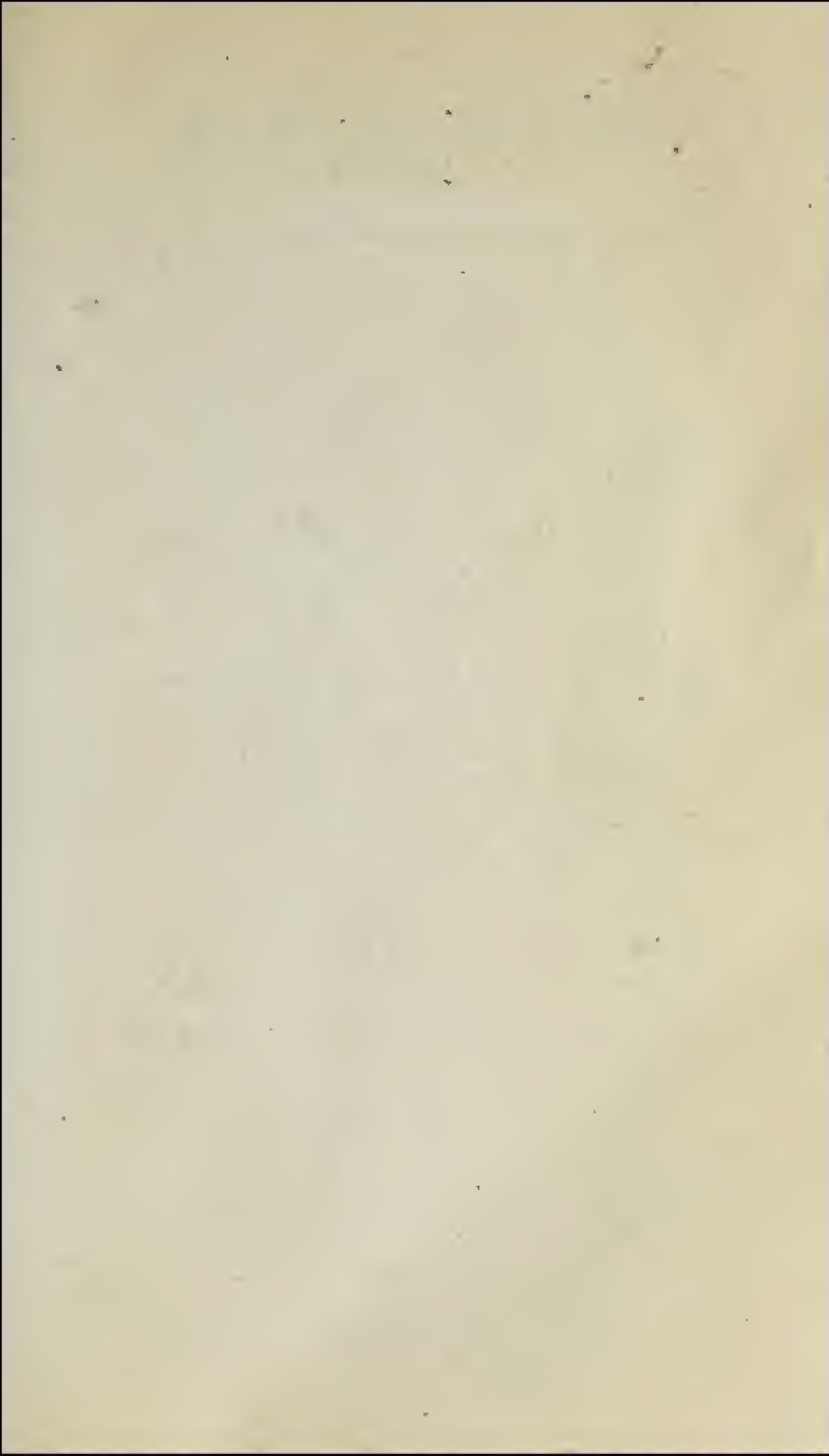
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To
Melissa Suzanne



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND OTHER STUFF

A lot of people have to work really hard to make a book. One of those people is Marc Resnick, the editor of this book. He's got a really tough job. For one thing, he has to put up with me—a big-time genius author of video game books. That's not easy, because I play big-time genius tricks on him. And he's a good sport about it.

I also want to thank the kids who share their thoughts about their favorite games. They're pretty cool kids. It's also a lot of fun using their words in the book.

Lastly, I want to thank Beverly. She's

helped with a lot of the interviews for the past few books and she's done a great job. So, thanks again, Beverly!

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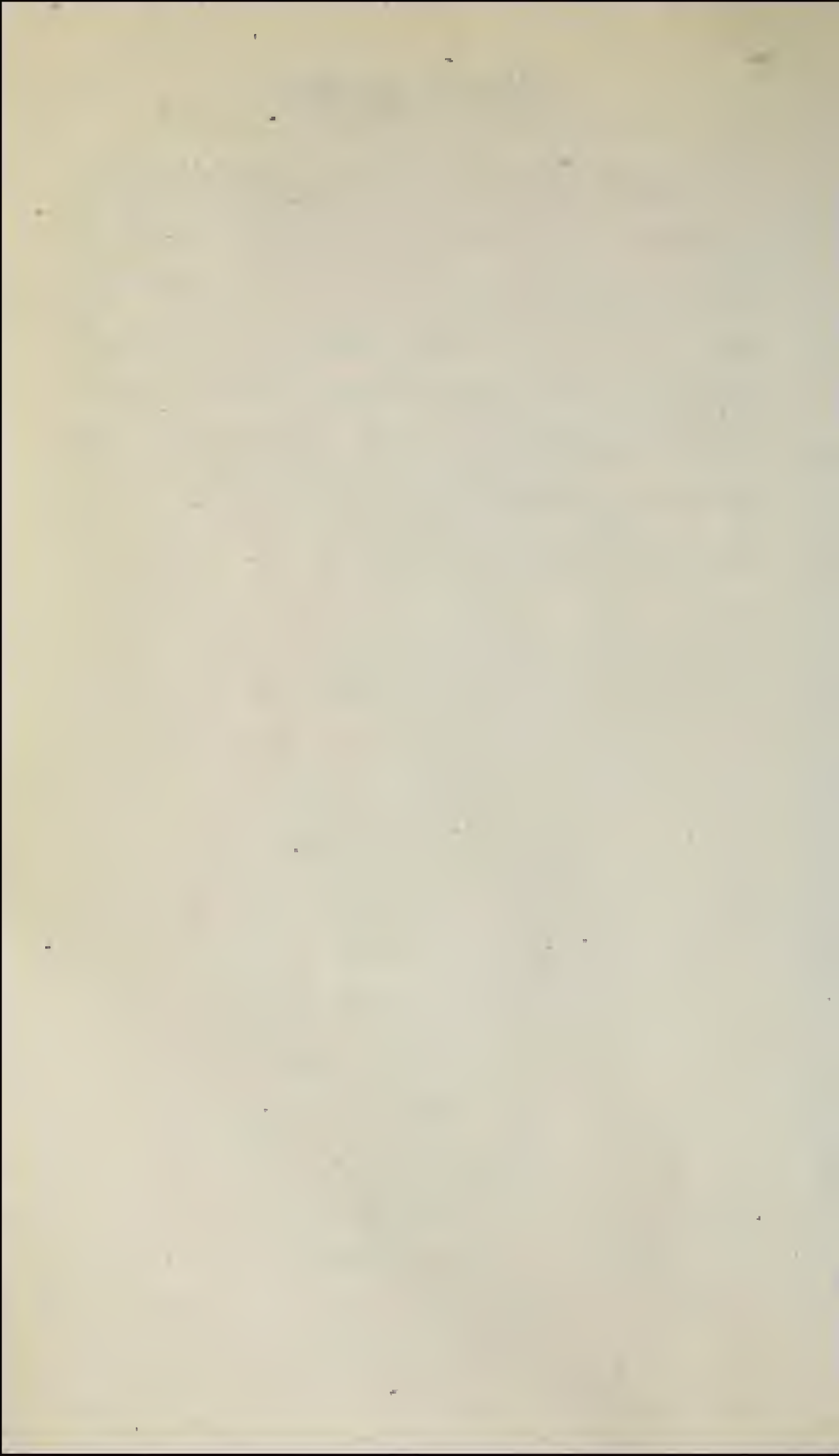
THE MONSTER INTRODUCTION!

THIS STORY BEGINS VERY SIMPLY. ONCE upon a time, in a land far, far away I was sitting in my favorite chair thinking serious thoughts. As you know, if you've read the other video game books, I'm a big-time serious writer with lots of very serious thoughts. A lot of people don't realize this because I do most of my big-time, important-writer thinking while watching cartoons and eating cold pizza. But the fact is, I'm such a big-time genius that I can do all three things at once: eat cold pizza, watch cartoons, and think big-time writer thoughts.

Anyway, I was deep into thinking, eating and watching when a brick came crashing through the window. I got to the window just in time to see the car zooming off down the block. Anyway, tied to the brick was a note that said, "Write Digimon Book. Now!" Plus, there was a coupon for \$2.00 off from my next pizza delivery.

Now if you're not a big-time important writer like me, you might worry about a brick through the window and the pizza coupon. Truthfully, the first time it happened to me, I was kind of worried. But as my editor, Marc, explained, that's how all big-time important writers get their work assignments. And he said that most really, really important writers get paid with pizza coupons. It's all pretty standard stuff, really. All the editors are so busy, it's just easier to race around in fast cars throwing bricks through the windows of big-time important writers like me. Anyway, that's what Marc told me.

He also explained that since I mostly work in secret, that I should never ever call them again or come by their offices. And the last (and most important) rule is that I should never come by their homes, especially late at night with any ideas about how they might want to play board games. But that's another story . . .



HAS THE WORLD GONE MONSTER CRAZY?

I know there's no such things as real monsters, but if they existed kids would be scared of them. Digimon aren't that scary.

—Scott

When I first heard about Pokémon being "pocket monsters," I thought that was really weird. Nobody ever heard of small monsters before. But they weren't like the monsters in horror movies. They were a lot different. The same with Digimon,

which means digital monsters. Monster means something else in these games. The monsters aren't scary. They are more like weird creatures.

—Max

AS ANYONE WITH WAY TOO MUCH TIME on their hands knows, there's a whole bunch of monster TV shows, video games . . . and trading cards out there. The thing that makes these monsters different from other monsters is that they're almost always cute . . . I said *almost* always.

Well, back in my day, monsters were scary. Godzilla was scary. Mothra was scary. The Creature from the Black Lagoon was scary. And Frankenstein was really, really scary. Now the monsters aren't so very scary anymore. Kids collect and trade monsters with Pokémon.

Plus, the monsters are a lot smaller. If you've ever seen a Godzilla movie—either the old or the new one, then you know just

how big they used to be. Today, monsters are small enough to fit in your pocket!

Pokémon—*pocket monsters*—were probably the first monsters that a lot of kids discovered. Pokémon is great. It's a great game and will probably get even better once the company introduces the Gold and Silver versions to the United States. But there are even more monster games, cards and shows out now for kids. Digimon and Monster Rancher are two others. And Tamagotchi (though not officially a monster) is still another one.

I think that all of these characters are pretty cool for a lot of different reasons. And, there's a lot of different stuff out there for all of them. Video games and trading cards, cartoons, action figures and battle figures. I'll talk about a lot of these in the book, though I won't be talking too much about Pokémon. I pretty much said everything I have to say about Pokémon in the last two books. This book is going to be mostly about Digimon, Monster

Rancher, Dragonball and Tamagotchis. I'll throw some other stuff in, too. So read carefully. There will be a test on it next week.

Okay, so even though the note from my publisher wanted me to write about Digimon, I thought I'd write about all the other stuff out there, too. It's not that Digimon isn't a great game, but the other stuff is pretty great, too. So, here goes nothing.

ALL THE STUFF!

FIRST OFF, I KNOW HOW MUCH MONSTER stuff is out there. A lot! And secondly, I know that a lot of kids are arguing over which is best. I'm going to settle that once and for all—the best one is . . . the one you like most.

It's true, there is no "best one." If you like Digimon best, then that's the best one—for you. If you like Pokémon best, the same is true. All of them are pretty cool and interesting for their own reasons. Remember, these are toys. I didn't say they are "only toys," but they are toys. So the best game is the game that gives you the

most fun. And that's not going to be the same one for everybody. If that were true, then you would go into a toy store and there would be only one toy—say that toy was model dump trucks—you'd have a whole toy store filled with just model dump trucks. You'd walk away saying, "What a dumb toy store."

So, if you like Digimon and another kid likes Dragonball Z, it's no big deal. People have different tastes in toys. That's just the way it is.

Secondly, you don't have to pick one that you like best. If you like both Digimon and Dragonball Z about the same, that's fine, too.

For awhile it seemed like everybody—I mean everybody—liked Pokémon. And that was kind of true, but not really. First off, there was so much Pokémon stuff, that a lot of kids liked a lot of different stuff. Some kids just liked the video game. Other kids liked the trading cards. And some kids just liked running around in circles

yelling, "Pokémon! Pokémon! Pokémon!" That's what made Pokémon so great, there was something for everyone, except maybe those kids who ran around in circles yelling. The whole point is that you should have fun. So it is okay to talk about what TV show and video game you like most and why you like it most, but it is definitely not okay to make someone feel bad for liking a particular show or saying that one show is definitely, absolutely better than the others.

WHO ARE THOSE KIDS, ANYWAY?

IF YOU READ ANY OF MY BOOKS ABOUT Pokémon, then you know that I listened to a lot of kids talk about their favorite games. They talked about Blue and Red cartridges, and trading cards and the television show. They wrote out stuff for me about Pokémon or they talked to me about the game. Then I took what they wrote and said and used it in the book.

This was a pretty good idea. First off, kids reading books sometimes get tired of old-guy authors going on and on and on about the games. Secondly, the kids who bought the book were interested to know

what other kids all over the country said about Pokémon.

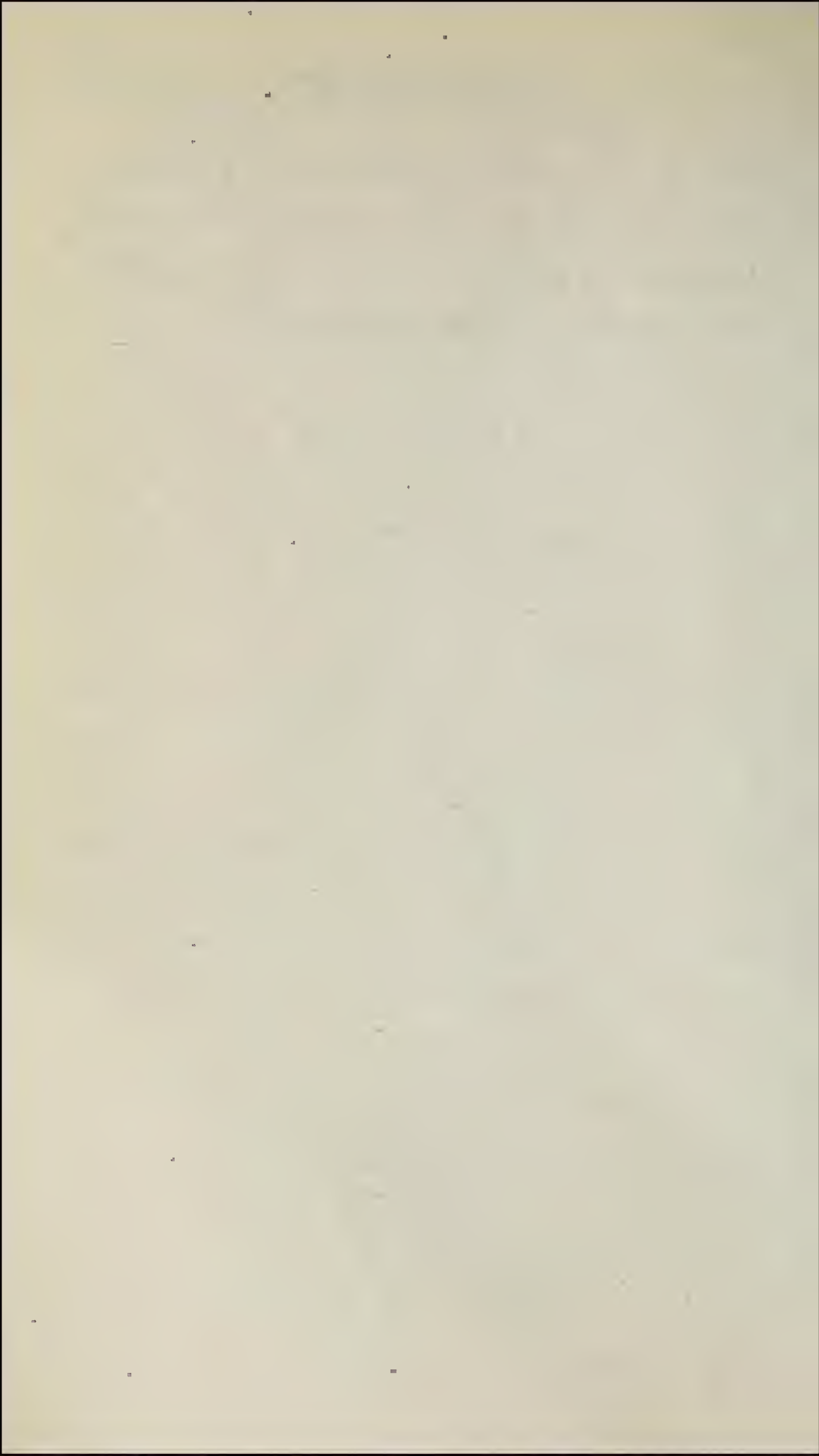
The question I was asked the most was, *Who are those kids?* So, I'll answer it the same way that I answered it in the last book—Hey, they're kids just like you. They are kids who like playing the game. Some of them finished the game and some of them didn't, but all of them loved Pokémon.

Some of these kids lived in my neighborhood. Some of them were kids whose parents I know. They're not famous kids or anything like that. Some of them were very good players and some of them were not-so-very good players. However, they all enjoyed Pokémon and that's what was important.

The kids in this book are no different. Just average, everyday kids who like the TV shows and video games.

I'd like to thank them all of their help. They really made the book better and I ap-

preciate that. I also appreciate the help my friend Beverly provided. She interviewed a bunch of the kids for this book and the last book. Plus, she did a really great job.



A WARNING TO PARENTS

A LOT HAS BEEN MADE OF THE VIOLENCE included in video games over the past year. As I have mentioned in previous books, video games are a fact of modern life. They are a part of childhood pop culture. In this, video games are no different than movies, home videos and music.

However, video games do have a much wider audience than ten or even five years ago. Games like Pokémon were designed specifically for children. Other games were never intended for use by children, just as some movies, music, books and every other entertainment medium contain

products designed for mature audience.

To their credit, the video game manufacturers have acted responsibly in instituting a ratings system for their video games. Just as movie, music and other entertainment mediums have done, they are acknowledging that not all of their products are suitable for all age groups. Pokémon, for example, is rated E for Everyone under the ESRB rating system. Other games may be rated T for Teen audiences or M for Mature players.

However, with the current increase in cross-marketing and entertainment imports, the job of monitoring a child's intake has become even more difficult. Mainstream television does an adequate job editing shows aimed at a young viewership that might be deemed offensive by U.S. audiences. Cultural differences account for some of this. Indeed, there are even a few Pokémon episodes that were not seen as appropriate for young Ameri-

can audiences. One of these, for instance, featured a handgun.

However, cable television, comic books, home DVDs and VHS cassettes generally do not have the same standards employed in broadcast television. This is something that parents should be well aware of when monitoring a child's entertainment. Likewise, *manga*—Japanese comic books—are also difficult to judge. Again, this is due, in large part, to cultural differences.

Parents should also be aware that just because it “looks” like a comic book or a cartoon does not necessarily mean that it was ever intended for children. Comic books and cartoons—known as *anime* and *manga* in Japan—are produced for a wider range of audiences than in the U.S. Many of the comics and cartoons available in retail stores were never intended for children.

However, the final responsibility does fall on the parents. As a parent it is your

job to monitor the video games, television shows and reading material your child consumes. We've come a long way since Space Invaders or Centipede, just as we've come a long way in terms of music, movies and television.

In video games, technology and audience demand have pushed the limits of what many parents would consider appropriate content for their child. And only a parent can make the final determination of what is appropriate for their child. That requires not only reading the rating on the box, but previewing the game as well.

WHAT'S NOT IN THIS BOOK

THERE'S A LOT OF STUFF IN THIS BOOK. There's stuff about TV shows and video games and even comics. There are episode guides and glossaries and game reviews. There are even a few jokes. I tried to put as much stuff in the book as I could.

What you won't find in this book are descriptions of very violent games, TV shows or comic books. Personally, I don't think that all of the violence in video games, comics and TV shows is really needed or all that cool. I know there's a lot of very violent games and shows out there, but there are also a ton of really fun shows and

games that aren't violent. A lot of people seem to miss this fact. So, I've done my best to pay attention to the less violent shows and games. And guess what? They really are a lot of fun.

Another thing that isn't in this book are complete walk-throughs for the games. I know, a lot of books include the walk-throughs. But I've said it once and I'll say it again, the walk-throughs make the game less fun. Where's the fun in reading about a surprise you'll encounter in a game? What's so fun about that? A video game or a comic book or even a TV show should be surprising. When you think about it, all three of them tell stories in different ways. So, I think it is more fun to let the stories tell themselves and explore the worlds in video games—let yourself be surprised.

I have included tips and hints for the video games. Hopefully these won't ruin the games for you. I've also reviewed a lot of the games and comics and TV shows. I did this to let you know what they were

about and whether you might like them or not. What I have tried to do is create the kind of book I'd like to read. Hopefully you'll enjoy it and maybe even learn something.

TAMAGOTCHI

I used to have a Tamagotchi original. When it first happened it was annoying going off every three seconds. The more it goes up the more you can leave it alone. I think I ended up taking out the batteries. I don't play with it anymore.

—David

YOU COULD SAY THAT IT ALL STARTED with an egg. Okay, that's not quite true, but it sounds good. The first digital pets were called *tamagotchi*. You say it like this:

TAM-AHHH-GOT-CHI. The name is Japanese and means "lovable egg." They were called "lovable eggs" because they were small, about the size of an egg and kind of shaped like an egg, only flatter.

According to the story, the Tamagotchi was invented when the designer saw a kids' cartoon about a young boy who wanted to take his pet turtle to school but couldn't. This lead him to think that it would be nice to have a pet you could take everywhere with you. And that's how they say Tamagotchis were born.

Anyway, the first time these eggs went on sale was in 1996 in Japan. Kids in Japan loved them. And when the eggs became available in the U.S., kids here loved them, too. These were the first "digital pets." If you compare them to Pokémon, they are pretty easy. There really wasn't a game that came with them. The whole idea was to keep them alive by feeding them, giving them medicine when they were sick and putting them to sleep when they were

tired. And every once in awhile they would beep when they needed something.

The eggs then became available in the U.S. in 1997. And guess what? Yep, American kids—boys and girls—liked them just as much as Japanese kids. As a matter of fact, it was reported one store sold out of 10,000 of the little critters in one day.

The first ones were made by a company called Bandai (the word Bandai, by the way, is Japanese for the word “forever”) Toys—the same folks who make Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and Digimon and a bunch of other stuff. However, after the first original Tamagotchis came out, a lot of other companies started making them, too.

These were very simple toys. They were small enough to fit in your pocket and had a tiny LCD screen like with your Game Boy, only smaller. I’m not sure why they were so popular, but they were. Even adults bought them.

I even bought one. Yes, I admit it. I

bought a Tamagotchi and carried it around for a couple of weeks. And then it became annoying. I mean it was really annoying. Finally I did the unthinkable—I ignored it. Not only did I ignore it, but I put it in the bottom of my underwear drawer to ignore it. Say what you will about Tamagotchis, they did not die quietly. Brave little critters, they went out beeping. My own personal Tamagotchi went out beeping under a pile of underwear . . .

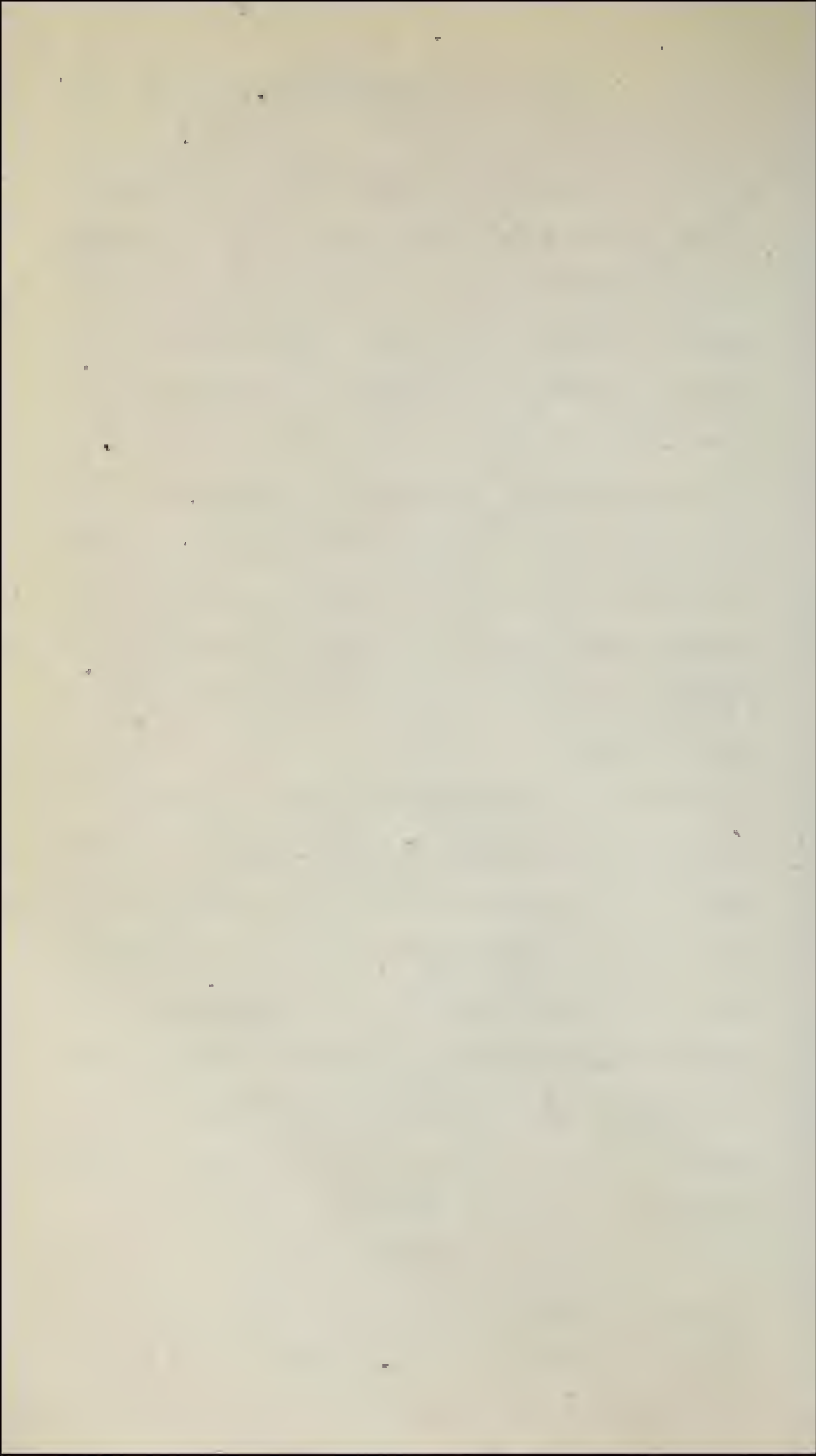
The original Tamagotchis looked like, well, chickens. After all, you did “raise” them from an egg. However, after the fad caught on, other “virtual pets” started showing up in toy stores. The best one, I think, was Giga Pet, that had a large choice of different kinds of animals, like a cat and dinosaur.

Digital pets are still around, sort of. I saw one recently that was a mermaid and another that was a dinosaur-creature-thing. These were different from the origi-

nal toys because they did different things. They were more like little video games, where the character did tricks or you could teach it things. I can't say for certain, but I think that they will always be around from now on.

Tamagotchis were really, really successful in Japan. A lot of kids really, really liked them. So, the next thing was a sequel, right? Okay, so the game they brought out next you've probably never seen because it wasn't sold in the U.S.

Called "Angel's Tamagotchi," kids had to raise a ghost that turned into an angel if they took care of it the right way. However, if they didn't take care of their ghost, then it turned into a devil. Japanese kids loved that game, too. But nobody was really sure if American kids and their parents would like it, so it was never sold in the U.S.



WHAT'S A VIRTUAL PET, ANYWAY?

VIRTUAL IS ONE OF THOSE WORDS YOU hear a lot of these days. It's *virtual this* and *virtual that* . . . a lot of times it's virtual reality or *virtual pet*. No doubt about it, virtual is a word that has been virtually overused a whole bunch.

In truth, virtual means "a lot like, but not quite the real thing" or, something that has a lot of the same attributes or qualities of the real thing, but is not real. It's pretty simple, really: virtual reality is not really reality. So, a virtual pet is a lot like a real pet, but not a real pet.

If you think of all the things that make

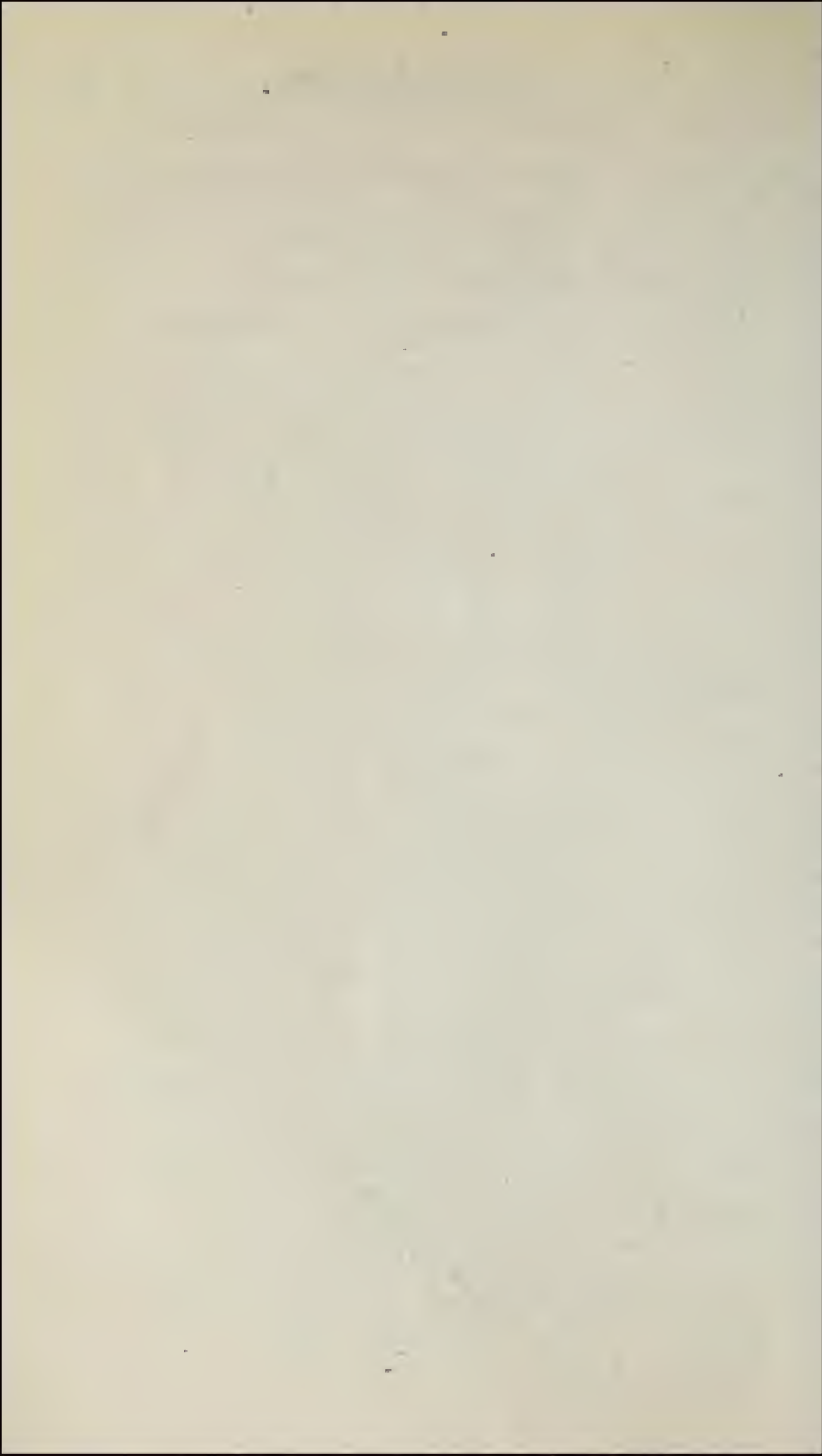
up a real pet, like the fact it has to eat, play, sleep and sometimes take medicine, then take all those needs a real pet has and put them into a computer chip, and you have a *virtual pet*.

So, whenever somebody says virtual, it always means close to being real, but not really real.

I have a million Tamagotchi. One of them, it evolves and a lot of times it got Agumon. I used to have all the names. All the papers got lost. I used to play with them but they ran out of batteries. Digimon should make one. I play when I get it for a few months and then it gets a little boring and then it runs out of batteries. You get to hook it up to another one and they get to battle. I like that part. I lost at

it twice. The first two times my Mom won. I was mad. I don't like losing to my Mom.

—Colin



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A VIRTUAL PET AND A REAL PET

#1

VIRTUAL PETS NEEDED BATTERIES TO RUN. You should never, ever try to insert a battery into a real pet.

#2

YOU COULD PUT A VIRTUAL PET INTO YOUR school backpack, pocket or school case. Real pets really don't like to be carried around in your pocket—particularly dogs, cats, hamsters or pet jellyfish.

#3

VIRTUAL PETS VIRTUALLY POOP. REAL pets . . . well, you know.

#4

WHEN A REAL PET DIES IT IS USUALLY BURIED in the backyard or flushed. When a virtual pet died, it was usually buried in the bottom of a drawer someplace or ended up under the bed.

#5

REAL PETS WILL EVENTUALLY COME out from under beds by themselves.

IF THEY WERE SOOOO ANNOYING, THEN WHY WERE THEY POPULAR?

AND BOY WERE THEY POPULAR. IN JAPAN, the company couldn't make enough of them to keep everyone happy and finally had a big ad put in newspapers apologizing. Millions and millions of the little critters were sold all over the world. When the critters were most popular, they were making more than a million of them a month.

I think they were popular for a couple of reasons. For one thing, Tamagotchis were really the first toy that I saw that told you when to play with it. Most toys just sit there and wait for you to notice them.

Tamagotchis would beep—they would *demand* that you play with them! This was very unique and a lot of kids loved it.

Another reason is that I think that kids like to take care of pets. Okay, so walking the dog can be a pain. So can changing the kitty litter—yuck to the *nth degree*! But with the little electronic critters, you took care of them by pressing a few buttons. And hey, pressing a few buttons is sure easier than changing kitty litter.

And they were, really, a video game. The game was to see how long you could keep the little thing alive. So, if you kept it alive longer than the kid down the block, then it felt as if you “won.”

IF THEY WERE SO POPULAR, THEN WHY CAN'T I BUY ONE NOW?

HEY, WHAT CAN I SAY, WHEN A KID FAD dies, it dies faster than—well, a Tamagotchi stuck in the bottom of an underwear drawer. I mean, what else is there to say, right?

Kids cried for them. They whined for them. They traded baseball cards, fancy school lunch desserts and plumbing fixtures out of their homes for a Tamagotchi. And now? Phhht! You couldn't trade a Tamagotchi for a double order of school lunch Brussels sprouts. Not even cold Brussels sprouts with whipped asparagus ice cream on top.

Okay, that's not quite true. There are still people out there who have their original Tamagotchi. And there are people out there who trade and collect them. You can usually find a Tamagotchi for sale online at eBay or one of the other auction sites.

But if you're a kid who "grew up" playing Pokémon, then these cyber-creatures might seem pretty boring.

SO, YOU MISSED OUT ON THE TAMAGOTCHI FAD? HA! HA! TOUGH LUCK!

SO WHAT IF YOU WERE ONLY FIVE WHEN Tamagotchis were big news and everyone had to have one? You should have thought ahead and begged your parents to buy one for you when you were two years old.

But wait! There's help. You can still buy a Tamagotchi game! And, personally, I think it's better than the original. The game isn't an egg-shaped deal like the original Tamagotchis. It's a Game Boy game. Now it came out a couple of years ago, but I've checked around my local stores and found a bunch of them. Some of the stores

even had them at reduced—on sale!—prices. So, that's pretty cool.

The Game Boy version of Tamagotchi is pretty much exactly like the little egg version, except with a lot more features. So, there's a lot more to do.

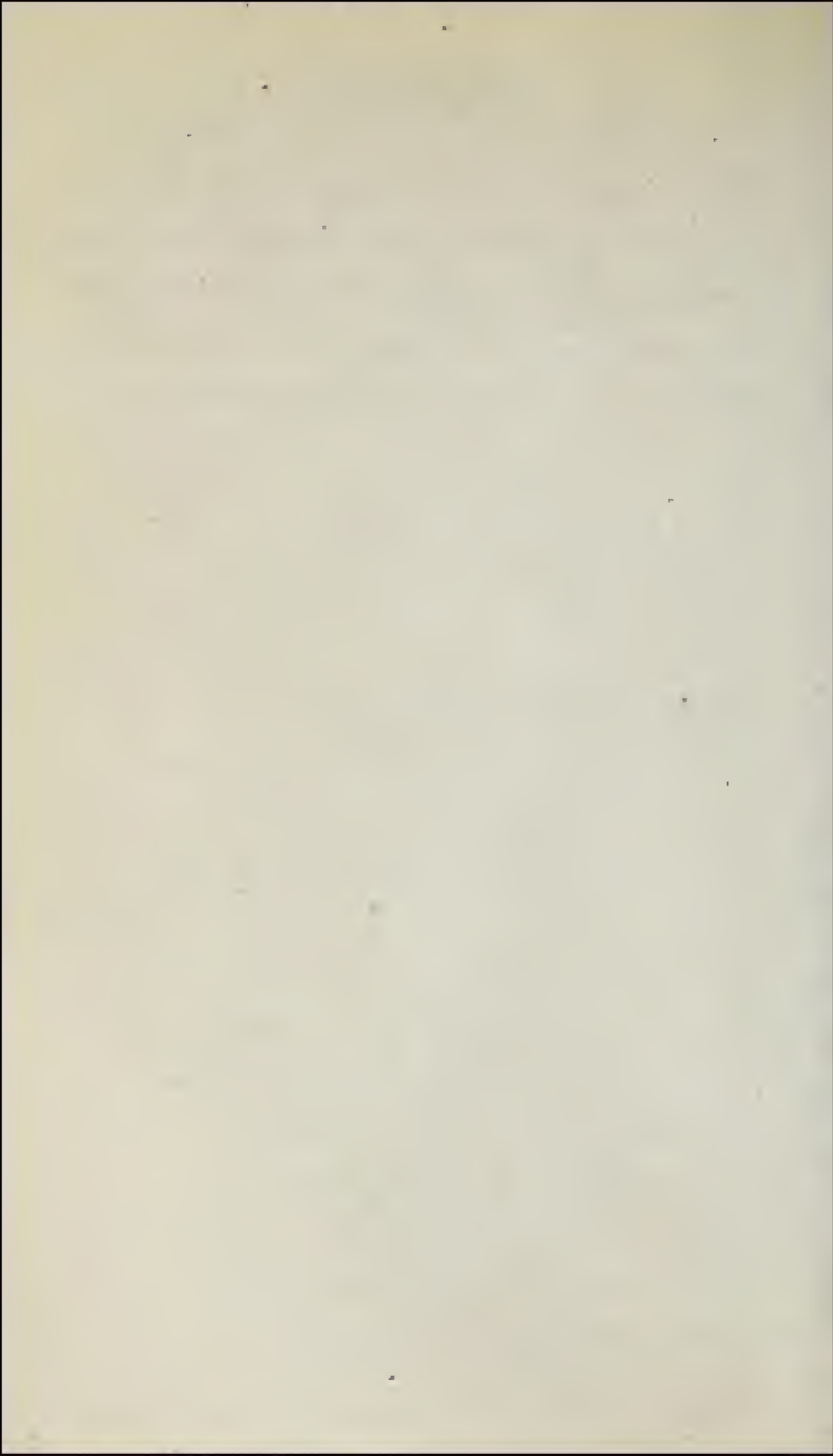
You just don't feed and clean up after the little critter, but with the Game Boy version you have to teach it stuff and play games with it.

The Game Boy Tamagotchi offers three different types of games you can play with it and you get to choose the kinds of foods you want to feed it to make it grow up healthy.

And here's the coolest thing—the darned critter doesn't beep at you every few hours. You play with the critter and then save the game. The game is scheduled to beep only when you are actually playing it. What that means is that it is a whole bunch easier to keep your virtual pet alive.

You can also name your Tamagotchi and the name appears on the screen.

Now, all of this stuff may sound simple when you compare it to Pokémon, but believe me, this is a pretty fun game. Plus, it lets you see what life was like before Pokémon—yes, there was life before Pokémon.



GAME BOY TAMAGOTCHI TIPS, TRICKS AND HINTS

Fun and Games:

THERE ARE THREE BASIC—EASY—GAMES for your pet to play. The first is the Smile Game; the second is the Study Game and the third is the Sports Game.

To have a healthy and happy critter you have to play all three games. The Smile Game makes your Tamagotchi happy, increasing his reading on the Fun Meter. The Study Game makes him smart as his IQ Meter increases. And, the Sports Game improves his Body Meter.

It's very important not to neglect any of

these games if you want a healthy and happy Tamagotchi. Since you can raise three Tamagotchis at a time, you might be tempted to make one of them smart, another one strong and the third one happy. I tried this and it doesn't work out.

Also, if you plan on going back to the lab and entering your Tamagotchi in contests or "Tournaments," then it is best that they be smart, strong and happy. The different types of Tournaments are a Race, Beauty Contest and Knowledge. It would make sense that a really, really smart Tamagotchi would do well in the Knowledge Tournament without being Happy or Strong. Not true! The Tamagotchis that do the best in the Tournaments are those who are Happy, Strong and Smart.

One at a Time:

EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN RAISE THREE Tamagotchis at once, it's better to start off

with just one until you get the hang of it. Trust me on this. Three of them can drive you crazy between the feeding and scolding and contests.

Tricks:

Mimitchi: To get a Mimitchi you hatch a Tamagotchi from a black egg and only feed it carrots. It will change (evolve?) into a Mimitchi when it turns six.

Sound and Effects Test: To get to the Sound Test you have to win a Tournament with an adult Tamagotchi. It doesn't matter if it is a Beauty, Race or Knowledge Tournament, any one of them is good. After you win the Tournament, you'll notice a symbol above the pet on the stat screen. Once you see the symbol, go to the options screen and there should be a new option for music. Now you can test the sound, music and sound effects.

Sound Test: Win any Tournament with an adult pet. A new icon will appear above your pet on the statistics screen. A music mode selection will now appear on the options screen. Select it for options for a sound test, sound effects test, sound test speed and a gallery of all pets.

But wait, there's more! There is also a gallery of all the different characters that you need to beat the game.

TAMAGOTCHI ON THE NET

SO, YOU'VE LOOKED IN ALL THE TOYS stores in your town. You've searched all the garage sales and flea markets and you've checked out all of the hobby shops, even the ones run by really cranky guys who won't let you touch anything. You've even asked the older brothers and sisters of your friends, if they still have an old Tamagotchi around. And guess what? Maybe you still can't find a Tamagotchi or the Game Boy version.

Hey, when toy fads go out of style, they really, really go out of style. Toys that are no longer *cool* or *gotta-have* seem to van-

ish. Poof! Where do they go? They end up in the same place as all those missing socks, caps to ballpoint pens and Pogs . . . Remember Pogs? I didn't think so.

There is one last place to find a Tamagotchi. And that's on the Internet. There are still a couple of companies selling them. And a few people are selling them on the online auction sites.

Now, here's a word of warning. Never, ever try to buy something online—from an auction site or anywhere else—without your parents' permission. Trust me on this. It's just not a good idea.

Also, be aware that there are still a lot of collectors of Tamagotchi around and their prices are likely to be higher than just the plain old toys. So, like anything else, shop around when you go to buy a Tamagotchi.

There are also a few sites out there that have Tamagotchi programs you can download to your home computer. Personally, I would not download any of

these programs. And I suggest that you do not download any of these programs.

Okay, okay, now I'm going to get angry letters from some guy out there who has a Tamagotchi he wants to share with the world. So I'll give you my reasons for not downloading a Tamagotchi.

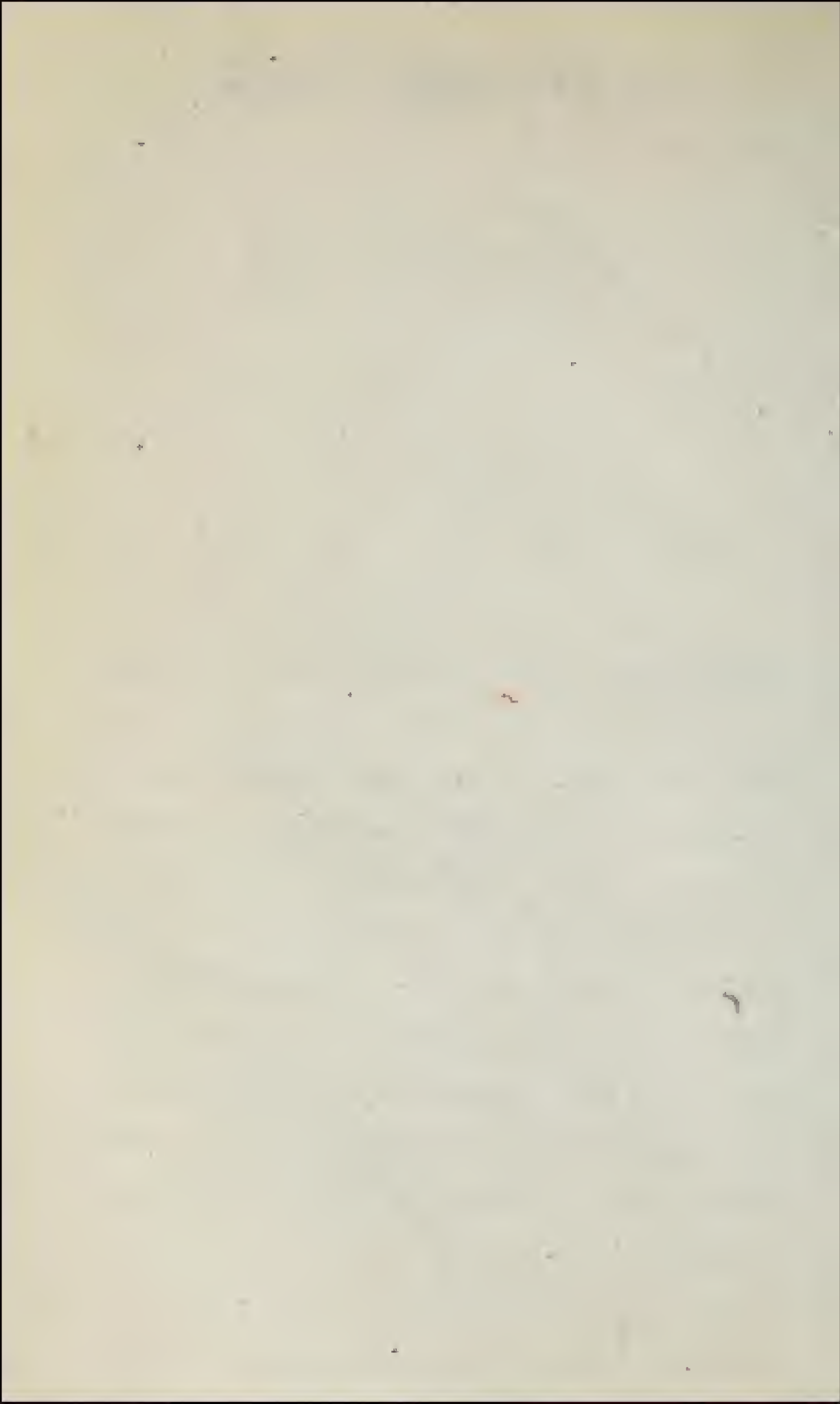
Any time you download anything from the Net, you take a chance of downloading a virus into your computer. And when you download from a personal Website and not a company Website, that risk increases. There might be 6,999 Tamagotchi Websites to download out there. And they might be run by really nice people. However, it's that one Website run by a jerk who loads a virus into the program that ruins it for everyone.

The other reason is that the program that makes up the original Tamagotchi is owned by the Bandai Corporation. It's the company's property and chances are that the person who has the exact same pro-

gram on his or her Website did not have permission from the company to give it away for free. So, it's basically cyber-stealing and not a nice thing to do.

AND ANOTHER THING!

THERE ARE A LOT OF SITES ON THE INTERNET that promise a "real virtual pet." But first you have to answer some "simple questions." Well, the questions ask a lot of personal stuff, and when you finally download your "real virtual pet," it turns out to be just a picture of a cat or dog or Tamagotchi. The picture doesn't do anything. It is just a picture. Then, a few days later you'll end up getting tons of stupid cheesy email from people advertising dumb stuff.



ANIME

I have to admit that I like Japanese cartoons more than American. They seem to have a lot more feel to them, the way that the characters look and move. It's just unique.

—Toby

IF YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE KIDS WHO watches TV, then you know that there are a bunch of cartoons from Japan on almost every day, including Saturday mornings. Some of these shows might even be your

favorites, like Pokémon, Digimon, or Dragonball Z.

As you know, these shows are a lot different than a lot of the other cartoons you watch. For one thing, they're made in Japan. The people look different than in other cartoons. The characters speak different. And the plots to the shows are different.

These shows—that is, cartoons made in Japan—are called *anime*. That is pronounced *A-Ne-May* or *Annie-May*. This is short for animation. What this means is that the shows are made in Japan, then brought over to the U.S. and translated into English.

Now, I've heard some parents talk about how "cheaply made" the shows are and how they are just made to sell stuff to kids. Nothing could be less true. In Japan, the cartoons are drawn in a different style than in America. What looks "cheap" to some people is really just a different style of drawing and telling a story. This is one

thing that kids understand better than their parents.

Some of these differences are things like really big eyes, really wild hair styles, and flashing backgrounds during action scenes. You may even see a character pop up in a little box at the bottom of the screen during an action scene and shout something. Sometimes you'll even see a slow-motion scene, like in live-action shows. All of these things are what make anime different from a lot of the American cartoons.

You may think that anime is new to America, but it isn't. As a matter of fact, some of your parents may remember watching it as kids. *Speed Racer* was a very popular cartoon almost thirty years ago. *Gigantor* was another show that was really popular years and years ago. Hardly anybody knew about anime then in America. As kids, we just thought the shows were weird and fun to watch. Hey, I remember watching them as a kid and think-

ing how weird the show looked. Still, kids liked those anime shows then and kids like anime shows now.

There's one thing about anime that is the same in the U.S. That's the fact that a lot of the cartoons on TV got their start in comic books. In Japan comic books, called manga, feature the same kind of artwork that you see on the TV shows. There are a few shows like this in the U.S. Superman, for instance, started off as a comic book. Batman started as a comic book, too.

In Japan, both anime and manga are enjoyed by everyone—kids, teenagers and adults. They even have anime soap operas and romance stories. This is important to remember, because if you want to check out some other anime besides just what is on TV, then you have to be careful. A lot of it isn't made for kids.

So, next time you're watching Pokémon or Digimon on TV, look closely for the differences between these shows and American cartoons. There a lot of things you

might notice. I think this is maybe one of the most interesting things about anime—the cultural differences between Japanese cartoons and American cartoons.

Here are some of the main differences between anime and American cartoons you might have noticed.

BIG, BIG HUGE EYES

Some of them I like. I can tell the differences, like I think when they're in shock and nervous or something they'll show it different. I think with some of the Japanese shows they'll make the shot sketchy. They make the eyes look really big with some of them in Japanese cartoons.

—David

THE FIRST THING IS THAT THE CHARACTERS' eyes are very large. Geesh, I mean these characters have eyes the size of din-

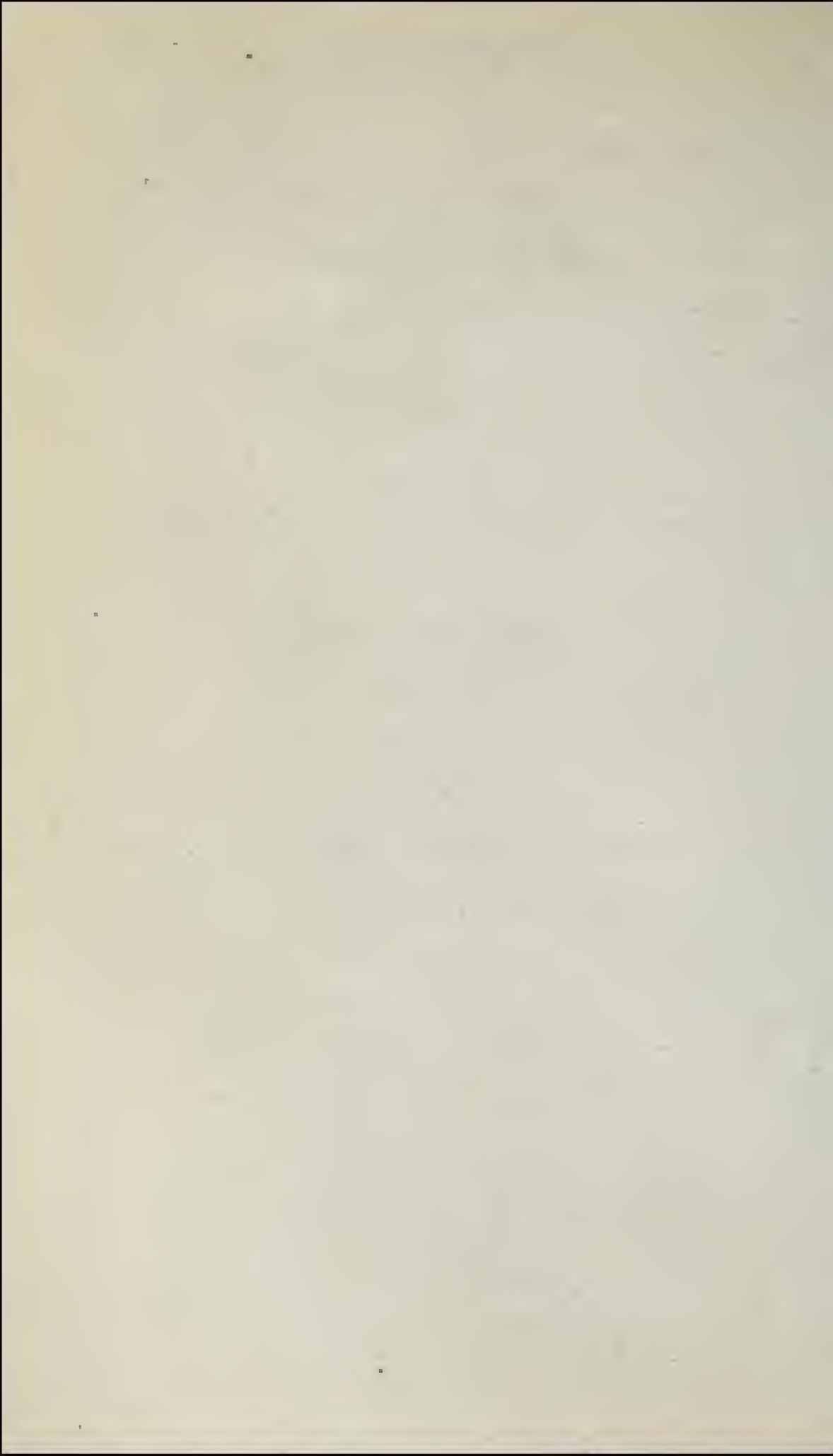
ner plates. Why? There are a lot of theories about this. The first one is that the first artists of anime, who started in the 1940s and 1950s, were copying the style of some old Disney cartoons. Bambi, for instance, was a huge hit in Japan and you remember how large the eyes were on Bambi.

The second reason is that people with small, tiny eyes are seen to be unfriendly. So you'll notice that all the good guys have big eyes and all the bad guys have smaller eyes. But even a good guy gets mad and may squint a little. This is important. The eyes let you know what the character is thinking without them having to say anything. This works just like real actors who change their expressions when they are mad, sad or happy.

I can tell because Japanese cartoons when they all get in the city, you can see like the stores are Japanese and have Japanese letters. I like Japanese cartoons

better because I like how they look with their eyes when they fight. And they help people and they try to fight evil.

—Ameer



WEIRD, WEIRD HAIR

A LOT OF THE CHARACTERS HAVE WEIRD hair. I mean the hair will stand up on end and maybe will be some wild color, like red or green. Are they punk rockers?

Well, no, they are not punk rockers. A lot of people think that by giving the characters wild hair styles, it makes it easy to tell the difference between characters. Also, a lot of teenagers in Japan have really wild hair styles, so it's not that unusual to see someone with pointy, bright red hair—though nobody really has the same kind of hair that you'll see in anime.

I think Japanese cartoons have better graphics and they have cool stuff, like for instance Dragonball Z. They got really great graphics and they got a lot of action. They also have weird people like aliens and cats like in Dragonball Z.

—John

SOME OF THE STORIES ARE STRANGE

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, IN JAPAN, ANIME IS not just for kids. And in Japan, anime is not just wham-bam action. Remember, the word anime only means "cartoon." Now in America, cartoons are made just for kids. So when you sit down to watch a cartoon, you know it is going to be either "action and adventure" like Batman and Superman or comedy like Animaniacs and the Simpsons.

In Japan, anime can be about anything. Sure, there is action and comedy, but also romance and drama. A lot of anime is made for kids, but there is also anime made for just adults, too.

Also, a lot of the plots are not what you may be used to. There are good guys and bad guys. There are kids and adults. There are even good monsters and bad monsters. However, some anime is based on ancient Japanese folk tales—like fairy tales—and some deal with very serious issues. In some anime, even the ones made for kids, people die in battle and don't come back. This is something that you won't see very often in American cartoons.

The main thing to remember when you watch your favorite anime cartoons is that they are different from American cartoons—not better or worse—just different. And it is interesting to see those differences.

I think the kids like the monsters because they're fun. I think the girls like them because they're cute and the boys like them because they fight.

—Nina

AN ANIME NOTE TO PARENTS

AS I SAID IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER, ANIME is a Japanese cartoon art form that is not restricted to children. Much of the anime shown in the U.S. is entirely "kid friendly." Indeed, the vast majority of anime portrays rigid moral codes between "right" and "wrong" in plot and characterization.

However, with that said, there is a wide variety of anime, some of it clearly intended for adults. Rating systems and placement in local video stores cannot be counted on to monitor content for a variety of reasons. Likewise, the translated ti-

tles, artwork and text displayed on video boxes frequently give few clues as to the content of the anime movie. Parents should take the time to preview all anime before letting kids watch it.

There are also cultural norms that differ drastically between Japan and the U.S. These include the treatment of both violence and explicit themes. Death of a character, for instance, is not uncommon even in anime intended for young children. For youngsters not accustomed to seeing a favorite character or even a villain "killed off" in a cartoon, the impact could be upsetting.

It should also be noted that some anime contain mystical or supernatural themes that might be deemed objectionable to some parents on religious grounds.

As with all entertainment, whether it be video games, movies or comic books, the author strongly suggests that parents preview all anime tapes and shows before allowing a child to view them.

I like the style of Japanese cartoons because of the way they draw the characters. They're always a little out of this world, fanciful and very, very colorful. Even the human characters look like this, especially their hair, which looks like the hair of someone in The Addams Family. They usually become more popular than American cartoons. In American cartoons of the same type they hardly ever have any animals, but in the Japanese cartoons there are many animals and monsters and dragons.

—Nina

American and Japanese cartoons are not exactly different. . . . It doesn't really matter, the language. I don't have a certain style that I like or don't watch.

I like both Japanese and American cartoons. I watch some cartoons in Japanese.

—Julia

AN ANIME GLOSSARY

ADR: When you see this word in the cartoon's credits, it means Automated Dialogue Recording. That's a mouthful, so the people who make anime and cartoons, just took the first letter of each word and use that: ADR. Actors have to make the words from the script fit the way the mouths move on the screen. It's a hard job. Many of the actors do different voices for different characters in the same show.

Anime: Perhaps a shortened version of the English word for animation. Anime refers to cartoons in the Japanese style.

Anime is sometimes called Japanimation, combining two words: Japan and Animation.

DBZ: A shortened way of saying Dragonball Z, a popular anime both in the U.S. and Japan.

Flap: A slang word used by people who do the voices for English translation. The “flap” is the way the character’s mouth moves in time with the words.

Manga: A Japanese comic book. Just like anime, comic books in Japan are not just for kids. Adults read them, too. They are fantastically successful in Japan. Most anime stories were originally comic books before they became cartoons on TV or video.

Mangaka: A manga artist and writer. Someone who creates a manga is called a mangaka.

Mech: Often attached to words to mean “mechanical.” For instance, the series might be called, “Super-Duper Space Alien-Mech” and that would tip you off

that there is a robot or machine of some kind involved in the story.

-Mon: This is also attached to words, and you probably already know that it is short for "monster." Pokémon means "pocket monster" and Digimon means "digital monster."

OAV: (sometimes called OVA): This mean Original Animation Video. This is an anime made to be sold just on a videotape. In the U.S. when a movie comes out on videotape and not a movie theater or TV first, it often means that the movie or show was really, really bad. This is not true in Japan, where a lot of really, really good movies and shows come out on tape first.

Dr. Osamu Tezuka: Sometimes called "Japan's Walt Disney," he made some of the best known Japanese cartoons. His father wanted him to be a doctor, and he went to school to become a doctor, but kept drawing cartoons. The cartoon he is best known for in the U.S. was

called Mighty Atom in Japan and Astro Boy in the U.S.

Seiyuu: (pronounced “say you”) The Japanese word that means voice actors.

Those actors who provide the voices for anime. In most cases, American actors provide the voices when the film or television episode is brought to the U.S.

One notable exception is Pikachu. The voice American audiences hear for the Pokémon is the same one that Japanese audiences hear.

Senshi: A Japanese word that means “warrior.”

Sentai: It means that the show features a “team of heros,” but sometimes also means that the show is also “live action,” like Power Rangers.

Shoujo: (or sometimes spelled “Shojo”) means anime for young girls.

Subtitles: Okay, this is a word you may already know. A subtitle is when a movie comes from another country and

the translation of what the actors are saying appears written at the bottom of the screen. A lot of kids' anime is translated by English-speaking actors and not subtitled. Pokémon would be one example of this. However, some other anime shows—usually the ones on cable or for rent at the video store—have subtitles.

-Tech: When a manga or anime series ends with “tech” like in MonsterTech (a name I just made up) or Bubblegum-Tech, it usually means it is about technology or machines. Machines and technology are very common themes or subjects in both manga and anime.

It looks different. The Japanese drawings are different. Their drawings are better, how they draw. Mostly American cartoons do a lot of live shows, there's not many good drawers.

—Colin

I think the shows are just for fun. Frankly I don't think they have any messages.

—Nina

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER . . .

SINCE MANGA AND ANIME ARE CREATED IN Japan, then the names might seem a little strange. This is only normal. Sometimes in manga, anime and video games the names are changed when they are brought to the U.S. For instance, in the Japanese version of Pokémon, Professor Oak is Professor Okida (that means orchid, a type of flower). And remember, Ash is called Satoshi in Japan, and Gary is called Shigeru. They are still the same character, but with different names. Nintendo took special care to rename a lot of the characters and places in Pokémon. This was so kids could

enjoy it more and it wouldn't seem as "strange."

However, in some anime and manga sold in the U.S. the names are the original Japanese names. This might take a little "getting used to," but it is still worth trying.

In fact, if you read magazines or search the internet you might come across two or more different spellings of the same name! This is particularly true on Websites set up by Japanese fans in English. For example, Vegeta from Dragonball is often spelled Vegita and Frieza is sometimes spelled Freeza.

DIGIMON THE TV SHOW

I like how it starts and how it ends. I like when they start to fight things and destroy monsters and help Digimon. The Digimon help them because sometimes the bad Digimon have Black Gears inside them and when they destroy the Black Gears they start to help them. Then when they finish fighting the Black Gears off of them, those Digimon start to help them and take them wherever they want and help them.

—Ameer

IF YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING THE TV SHOW, then you already know the basic plot. Just in case you're new to the show, here's the basic plot. Seven normal, average, everyday boring kids are suddenly transported from their normal, average, everyday (and yes, boring) camp to the land of Digimon—Digital Monsters—called DigiWorld.

They find they each have a digivice that comes complete with a Digital Monster that can digivolve. Now they all have to work as a team against the baddies.

Patamon is my favorite because it's so cute and it's like a baby Digimon. But it's not a baby Digimon anymore when it gets bigger and learns more stuff. I really think Patamon is my favorite.

—Emma

The leader of Digimon I like. I don't remember his name. I like

the way he looks and I like him because he's the leader. He's almost like Ash in Pokémon but has brown hair.

—Nicholas

I don't like how the guys get tricked so easily. In one of the episodes there's a bat and it tricks one of the young boys, T. K. His brother went on this fake boat and he's looking for someone. And he told T. K. to stay there. And the bat tricked him so easily. Normally the characters are so easily tricked. I don't like that. With the masks, in the ghost episode he should have told the dude to take off the mask when he met him. They just walked in and were trapped. They're smart but at times they're gullible. They get into too much trouble. I've

never seen a wild Digimon. That would be cool if they saw a wild Digimon and it came on their team.

—Colin

In Digimon, I don't see much of a message. In Pokémon it's kind of like "practice makes perfect" kind of thing.

—David

DIGIMON EPISODE GUIDE

- #1. And So It Begins . . .
- #2. The Birth of Greymon
- #3. Garurumon
- #4. Biyomon Gets Firepower
- #5. Kabuterimon's Electro Shocker
- #6. Togemon in Toy Town
- #7. Ikkakumon's Harpoon Torpedo
- #8. Evil Shows His Face
- #9. Subzero Ice Punch
- #10. A Clue from the Digi-Past
- #11. The Dancing Digimon
- #12. Digibaby Boom
- #13. Legend of the Digidestined

- #14. Departure for a New Continent
- #15. The Dark Network of Etemon
- #16. The Arrival of SkullGreymon
- #17. The Crest of Sincerity
- #18. The Piximon Cometh
- #19. The Prisoner of the Pyramid
- #20. The Earthquake of MetalGreymon
- #21. Home Away From Home
- #22. Forget About It!
- #23. WereGarurumon's Diner
- #24. No Questions, Please
- #25. Princess Karaoke

It's fun to watch because it has fights in it and my favorite one was the nursery one. In that one there were lots of babies and another baby came out and it made its own cradle and more and more came out until one made its first evolve. It was pink and looked like Patamon but Patamon is smaller.

—Emma

MetalGreymon is my favorite. He's an ultimate form of one Digimon and he has metal parts on him. And he shoots these missiles out of his chest. These metal parts open and two missiles fly out and that's his attack. And he has wings. He flies.

—Kuniyoshi

The boy with the brown hair, Tai, and Agumon are my favorites. Agumon's a dragon and I like dragons. He's one of the main characters and does a lot. Plus he's funny. He gets really hungry and his belly turns red and something happens. When they try and digivolve he doesn't do much. He just sits there and can't do much. They have to feed him or they die. They feed him

regular food like stuff me and you eat.

—Colin

I like Ikkakumon, Kabuterimon, Gomamon, DemiDevimon, WereGarurumon, and Patamon, because they look cool and they have cool powers. They are all powerful too.

—Reilly

MEET THE DIGI-KIDS

Tai is my favorite kid. His Digimon can digivolve into Metal-Greymon and T. K.'s crest is the crest of hope. Mimi's crest is the crest of sincerity. That means to be sincere. She likes to go shopping at the mall. Joe's crest is the crest of reliability. It means that people can rely on you. Izzy's crest is the crest of knowledge. There's also Sora, I think. Sora's crest is the crest of love. There's also an ace child, but she comes later when they go back to the

real world to find her. She's Tai's little sister. She has short brown hair.

—Kuniyoshi

Tai: Courageous and athletic. He is the leader of the team.

Tai's Digimon: Koromon/Agumon/Greymon/MetalGreymon

Joe: A real worrywart, Joe is very, very cautious. Sometimes his caution in situations is a good thing and sometimes it is a bad thing.

Joe's Digimon: Gomamon/Ikkakumon/Zudomon

Mimi: She can act like a spoiled brat, but she often comes through for the team when they need her.

Mimi's Digimon: Tanemon/Palmon/Togemon

T. K.: He's Matt's little brother and the youngest member of the team. He still feels he has to prove himself to the bigger kids.

T. K.'s Digimon: Tokomon/Patamon/Angemon

Matt: He's T. K.'s big brother. But he's also someone who sometimes has trouble working with the team.

Matt's Digimon: Tsunomon/Gabumon/Garurumon

Sora: Very mature for her age, she is often cautious. This is a good thing, since Tai sometimes needs someone to warn him about danger.

Sora's Digimon: Yokomon/Biyomon/Birdramon

Izzy: He's a computer genius and very valuable to the team.

Izzy's Digimon: Motimon/Tentamon/MegaKabuterimon

The very cool thing about the kids in Digimon is that they are a lot like kids all of us know. They are all very different from one another, but they still have to figure out a way to get along and work as a team. In fact, working as a team is

one of the harder things they have to do. Each of them is good at something and each of them needs the help of the others to survive in the strange DigiWorld.

The other thing that's kind of neat is that the Digimon are more like partners than pets. In Pokémon, the Pokémon are more like pets—or things you collect—in Digimon they are part of the team. Not only are they a part of the team, but they actually teach the kids stuff.

I like all of the Digimon. I like the one that I have the best, MetalGreymon. I also like Agumon because he's a Digimon. He's very little and he's a little dinosaur. Fire comes out of his mouth like a fireball. I also like Greymon because he blows fire out of his mouth but he's bigger than Agumon. It does a lot of damage. He's a good Digimon.

—Nicholas

I don't know their [the character's] names. I like a dinosaur that's in the show. He fights. He sets up traps like a goalie trap. He's trying to trap the good guys. He's one of the bad Digimon. The goalie falls down and they go in it. He fights the good Digimon. The good Digimon win. The bad guys then let the good guys go.

—Dylan

One reason [I watch is because] it's exciting. It's on at 4:30. It's an adventure story and it doesn't get boring even if you watch it over and over. Maybe I'll watch it every other week and one week I'll watch it every day and maybe one week I'll not watch it at all. Normally I watch it every other day.

—Colin

I like Tai. He's kind of like the leader of the group. He's a kid like the rest of them, but the show makes it seem like he's more of the leader. He decides most of what they're doing, where they're going, what they should do. A few times they disagree with him and they end up getting into fights with him. Whenever you argue with someone like that, both sides have their points. I'd probably have to say I like MetalGreymon. He's has the flames and the metal. It just makes him look cool.

—David

HANDY-DANDY FULL NAME GUIDE

Tai	Taichi Kamiya
Matt	Yamato Ishida
Sora	Sora Takenouchi
Izzy	Koushiro Izumi
Mimi	Mimi Tachikawa
Joe	Joe Kido
T. K.	Takeru Takaishi*

I like Tai because he's one of the main characters and he owns Agumon and he does a lot of stuff. He's one of the costars and

*Note that T. K.'s last name is different than Matt's.

I like stars. He's one of the most brave people and he does most of the brave stuff I think. His symbol is the sun. One episode when they met a ghost Digimon and then it scared him and people were wearing masks. They took off the masks and they were ghosts and they tried to kill him and eat him up. Someone else was going to get eaten up. Digimon digivolved and came up and tried to kill them. They beat up the ghosts and scared them off.

—Colin

Tai, Matt, Izzy and Joe are my favorites. Tai is the leader. Matt I like because he knows how to fight and he knows how to use the crest and tag. His crest is called friendship. He uses it when the Digimon is in trouble

and the crest glows. They can digivolve to their third form and grow even stronger. The power of friendship makes them even stronger and they can digivolve. The power of everybody being friendly makes them digivolve. Izzy is real smart and he knows how to use the tags and the power of the tags and crest. His crest is the power of knowledge. He uses it in a different way like if he starts getting smarter then the crest of knowledge glows and the Digimon can digivolve and get stronger. Joe is funny and he acts silly. Like he doesn't know that in the beginning when he first met Gomamon he started to run and scream and he looked scared and ran away. Matt, he knows how to use the crest, but not the tags, but when they were fighting the Leomon,

*and he saw Tai using the tags,
then he started to know how to
use the tags then.*

—Ameer

MEET THE MAIN BADDIES

Devimon: The head baddie who wants to be the king of DigiWorld. He can control Digimon by using his Black Gears.

Etemon: A rock star kind of Digimon who has a Dark Network and loud music that he uses against the good guys.

Kuwagamon: A really gross flying attack insect creature. Uggh!

SOME INTERESTING STUFF YOU SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR

I like Digimon because it looks cool when they Digivolve. In Pokémon they don't really evolve a lot. It's a rare occasion too when you get to see them evolve.

—Scott

SINCE THE ACTION TAKES PLACE IN A DIGITAL world, it only makes sense that there's be a lot of stuff about computers. For instance, a lot of the good Digimon are of the "Data" type. Data, of course, is the information that is processed by a computer.

Another type is "Vaccine." This, of course, probably means that it's effective against "Virus" types. Of course you know that a computer virus is a computer program that can make a computer sick by giving it the wrong instructions.

Now, here's something you probably didn't know, Digimon like Kuwagamon, are insectoid. I would guess that insectoid—bugs—is a kind of joke about "computer bugs." A computer has a bug when something is wrong with it. When the person who put in the data or programmed it made a mistake and it doesn't work right, they say it has "a bug."

There's a reason why they say a computer that doesn't work right has a bug. That's because a long time ago, when computers were huge giant things, one of them didn't work right. They tried to figure out why, and finally started taking it apart. Deep inside the machine they found . . . a bug. It was a moth, actually. So, whenever

a computer didn't work right after that, they said, "It must have a bug."

Digimon and Pokémon both involve these types of monsters, creatures or whatever you call them. And then in Digimon the monsters talk but in Pokémon the creatures say their names repeatedly over and over. And that's their speech. In Pokémon they evolve when they win battles and stuff and they gain experience and then they stay like that in that form until they evolve again, if they do. In Digimon, they digivolve and they'll go to the next form. Little devices that fell out of the sky, those are what help them digivolve and they go to the next form when they have enough strength and usually when the

kids are in danger. But then when they go to bigger forms, like Greymon and Metal-Greymon, they'll go back a stage or two. They have to reverse themselves because they get too weak after they fight.

—David

I am a Digimaniac. My best friend Zane and I started a Digimon club. We call it the Digidestine Brothers. So far we have six members.

—John

SO, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

In Pokémon the monsters look like half monster and half animal. In Digimon, they're all monster and have orange fur and horns and they can talk. In Monster Ranchers they look like plain old monsters.

—Adin

My favorite show is going to take some thinking. I like Digimon and Pokémon equal.

—Colin

It's different from Pokémon because they don't turn into other forms and they're not in Pokéballs like Pokémon. They don't digivolve like Digimon. It's different from Pokémon because they fight evil . . . In Digimon they start in reality and then go in the DigiWorld.

—Kuniyoshi

I have Ikkakumon. He's my favorite, and Greymon also. Ikkakumon because I like how he digivolves and he attacks. He gets real big and he starts attacking with his missiles. He gets real big. He's all fuzzy and he has a knife on his head. Greymon is a favorite because I like his moves, how his powers are. I like how he does fire and I like how he digivolves to his second form. He starts out as Agumon.

I like Greymon better because he does powerful moves like his fire attack and I like when he turns into his third form because when he turns into his third form he's even more powerful. That's MetalGreymon.

—Ameer

I'VE HEARD THIS A LOT OVER THE LAST couple of months . . . what's the difference between Pokémon and Digimon? Okay, okay, I'll admit it, most of the time I hear it from parents. They seem to have a hard time telling the difference between the characters from the two TV shows and games and cards.

So, here's a handy guide to help you explain the difference to your parents.

#1

Digimon: Seven major heroes

Pokémon: One major hero

#2

Digimon: A lot of cool technology and gadgets, like digivices and computers

Pokémon: One major gadget—the Pokédex, and maybe a couple others if you count the Pokeball, and key-card and stuff like that.

#3

Digimon: Digimon can evolve—*digivolve*—to four stages or more to fight battles

Pokémon: Can evolve to three stages

#4

Pokémon: Ash's goal is to become a Pokémon Master

Digimon: Tai and his friends' goal is to save the world from the dreaded fate that comes from "Black Gears"

#5

Pokémon: Ash and Pokémon Masters have to train their Pokémon for combat. The Pokémon are like pets they have to take care of between battles.

Digimon: Tai and his friends learn important lessons from their Digimon. The Digimon are not pets, but more like partners and sometimes even teachers.

#6

Pokémon: Pokémon can't really talk—no, Pikachu's "Pika! Pika!" doesn't count.

Digimon: The Digimon Tai and his friends meet can talk.

My favorite show is Pokémon because Pokémon is really funnier. Like one day in the show Ash was bumping into an invisible wall. Digimon is fun and Monster Rancher is fun but Pokémon is more fun.

—Emma

Digimon digivolve and dedigivolve. That means they go back to their Digimon form before they digivolved. In Pokémon they evolve and you cannot

de-evolve or go back to the previous state they were in. Most of the Pokémon are cuter than the Digimon are. And most of the Digimon seem to be stronger than the Pokémon and they seem to have no resistance. They seem to resist nothing. They seem to be able to fight water, fire, plants, animals, everything.

—Nina

I like Tai because his hair looks funny. It's really big, like a foot tall and all pointy. I like Agumon because he's short and cute. He's like this little three-foot yellow dinosaur and he can talk. He gets big, very big when he digivolves into this big flying thing with an armor protecting his face, Greymon I think. I like him better when he's that huge

metal guy because he's like better at killing people.

—Adin

They go from a cool little guy to an even cooler little dude to an even cooler one. The stuff they do, the way they act, everything about them changes. They don't do the same stuff. They look cooler. When they evolve they look cooler and do stuff they didn't do before and act more mature and they fight better.

—Colin

I like the monsters when they're bigger and little in Digimon. I don't like Pokémon anymore because I hate when, how they catch the Pokémon by throwing Pokéballs at them. It hits their face and that could really break their nose. That's violent be-

cause you could break someone's nose doing that.

—Ameer

Digimon can beat Pokémon in one shot if they battle. For example, say a Koromon versus a Magnaton. Koromon can use bubble blue and just send it into oblivion.

—Scott

FIVE DUMB (BUT TRUE!) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIGIMON AND POKÉMON

- 1)** They are on TV at different times.
- 2)** If they weren't completely different, then they'd be exactly the same, except where they were different.
- 3)** All the characters in Digimon have much better haircuts.
- 4)** Adults haven't started making fun of Digimon. . . . yet.
- 5)** T. K.'s Patamon is Pikachu's evil twin.. . .(just kidding).

My favorite character in the TV show is Patamon because she's really, really, really cute. Even though she looks like she's a very weak Digimon, she's really very strong.

—Nina

Pokémon is more exciting because it's a longer show than Digimon. I like Pokémon better because I know all of the Pokémon.

—Dylan

GADGETS, GIZMOS AND DIGIVICES!

IF YOU WATCH THE DIGIMON SHOW, THEN you know that there are a lot of gadgets in the DigiWorld. I mean, *a lot*. In Pokémon, there weren't that many gadgets. Plus, not all of the gadgets are good. For instance, the Black Gears that the baddies use to turn good Digimon bad are definitely not good gadgets.

Why all those gadgets?

Well, the easy answer is because they are in DigiWorld, a digital world, and gadgets can come in very handy.

There is a more serious answer, though, which I think is more interesting. Gadgets,

gizmos and technology is a topic that appears a lot in Japanese anime. The writers of anime often like to explore—think about—the idea of good technology and bad technology. They also like to think and write about how technology changes our lives for both better and worse.

Another way to think about it is like this: In the same way that the human characters have their faults in the Digimon story—for instance, Tai can be too headstrong—so too does technology have its faults.

WHAT DOES “DIGITAL” MEAN, ANYWAY?

THERE'S A SHORT ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. Digital means that something is controlled by a computer processor, like a chip or a whole computer. If you have a digital watch, then there's a little computer chip in there controlling all of its different parts, like the numbers telling time and the light, the date and alarm.

That's a correct answer, but it is not complete. The word “digital”—which comes from the word “digits” meaning numbers. When you take apart a computer program—the language that tells a computer what to do—to its very basics

there are only two numbers: 1 and 0. Two numbers don't sound like a lot, but you can arrange them in ways that can do wonderful things . . . like record music on a CD or an entire movie on a DVD. If you were to decode a CD or DVD or a video game, you would find long, long strings of ones and zeroes. They wouldn't look like a movie or music to you, but they tell the microchips in your CD player or DVD player what to do. To the chips in the players, they sound like, "Hey, color this little piece of the screen blue! Color that part of the screen green! Play this music—here's the code for it!"

So, when someone talks about a "digital world" or "digital pets," you know that the "world" or "pets" or even the monsters are controlled by a computer.

TEN STUPIDEST DIGIMON QUESTIONS (EVER)!

1) Q: How high would a real Digimon bounce if I dropped it off the Empire State Building?

A: Real Digimon are not allowed in the Empire State Building for just that reason.

2) Q: Is there a Blockbuster Video Store in Digiworld?

A: Not yet, but I heard a rumor that there's a Starbucks.

3) Q: If Abraham Lincoln and Pikachu fought Tai and Koromon, who would win?

A: Nobody—as I stated clearly in

How to Become a Pokémon Master, Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth President of the United States, everyone else mentioned is a cartoon or video game character.

- 4) **Q:** A friend of mine ate nine hot dogs at a bowling birthday party and puked once at the bowling alley, then again on the ride home and when he got home he puked in the bathtub again.

A: That's not a question. Plus, it's disgusting.

- 5) **Q:** What if Tai and Koromon fought everyone in the WWF in a super deathmatch cage battle on the moon?

A: Then the fight would be fake. And yes, you would still probably be able to buy the T-shirt.

- 6) **Q:** What would happen if you tried to put Yokomon in a Pokéball?

A: Yokomon would get squashed and squished.

7) Q: I traded my mom's minivan to the guy in the comic book store for the first Digimon comic in a wrapper. Did I get a good deal?

A: Yes, you got an excellent deal. However, you might want to consider running away to join the circus before your mom gets home.

8) Q: What would happen if Pikachu ever met Kuwagamon?

A: Don't ask.

9) Q: And another kid I know puked at a pool party in the pool and all the kids had to get out of the pool because it was filled with puke.

A: That's still not a question, but I'd make some new friends if I were you.

10) Q: If I bought all the Digimon stuff in the world and all the Pokémon stuff in the world would I be King of Everybody?

A: No, but you'd probably have a very messy room.

11) Q: Do Digmon ever puke?

A: Sorry, you're only allowed ten questions.

YEA! HOORAY! DIGIMON TRADING CARDS!

I have Birdramon in a holographic..It shines if I put it in the light and if I keep on turning it, it gets even lighter. I have a MetalGreymon holographic.

—Ameer

I collected all thirty-four Digimon cards, plus one ultimate card. There are eight ultimates and I only have one. I'm going to try to get the rest of them. You keep on collecting until you have every single card made.

That's the fun of it . . . There's not too many people who have the Digimon cards . . . I have some doubles, triples and quadruples of the cards, so I'm going to give my friend Zane the doubles, triples and quadruples."

—John

A lot of my friends don't have the cards yet because they're new. I would trade my Palamon for another Gomamon though.

—Reilly

OH, BOY, HERE WE GO AGAIN!

If you're a kid who survived *The Great Pokémon Trading Card Frenzy of '99*, then congratulations.

If you don't remember it, then let me give you a brief review. It was ugly. Kids were going crazy-nuts for Pokémon cards and there was no stopping them. Kids were throwing tantrums in hobby stores

and shopping malls. They were crying and whining and begging and pleading. They'd do anything for Pokémon cards . . . even clean their rooms and clear the table after dinner.

The cards were banned from schools. Kids were trading just about anything they could to get their hands on the cards they needed. Comic book stores were charging insane prices—hundreds of dollars—for some cards. All civilization was one step away from total and complete chaos.

So, what have we learned from this?

Probably nothing. Because just when you thought it was safe to go back into the comic book store . . . here come Digimon collecting cards!

But let's try to keep calm for this one, okay? Let's review the rules of card collecting again.

Rule #1

It's not a good idea to trade with someone much younger than yourself. A little kid might trade a rare card for a not-so-rare card. It's just not fair. You wouldn't be very proud of yourself if you beat a little kid in soccer or baseball. So why would you be proud of yourself for getting the better deal on a trade with a little kid. The best trades are done with someone your own age who understand the cards as well as you do.

Rule #2

If someone doesn't want to trade, don't bully them into it.

Rule #3

Both people should exchange the card or cards they want to trade at the same time.

Rule #4

Trade only cards. Don't trade your baseball glove or your little sister or the family microwave for a card.

Rule #5

I like the idea of two types of trades: Forever and For a Little While. However, whenever you trade, everyone involved should understand the rules of the trade.

Rule #6

If something is wrong with the card you are trading, don't try to hide it. If a card is ripped or written on by a little brother, then the person you are trading with should understand that fact.

Rule #7

If one of the cards in the trade turns out to be fake, then the trade should be called off immediately.

I mentioned some of these rules in my last Pokémon book. But I do think they are important. Trading is a game and like all games, everyone should have fun.

Digimon do have holographics like Pokémon and they're pretty expensive also, but not as expensive as Pokémon cards because they're not as popular as Pokémon.

—Nina

MegaKabuterimon confused me at first. I thought his move was called "thornbuster," but when I got the card it turned out to be

"hornbuster." We were confused because it sounds like he says "thornbuster" on the TV show. He has a very deep voice so it's hard to keep up with what he says. I like the card because it is a hologram. He only comes in hologram and he was very rare to get. Very rarely do you get an ultimate Digimon in a pack. I had luck with MegaKabuterimon. Some people say that ultimate Digimon cards are supposed to be lucky."

—John

THE CARDS

FIRST OFF, THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE SETS of cards. The first set is made for use in the digibattle strategy card game. The second set is a collector's set.

Since I don't have enough time or space to get into the game, then I'm just going to cover the cards for collecting. I'm sure there will be entire books and magazines out there that talk about the game. Right now, this section is just about collecting.

First off, as I'm writing this, there are: thirty-four "standard cards" and eight Ultimate Chase Cards sometimes called Ultimate Digimon cards.

That's a total of. . . . *calculating . . . calculating . . . calculating . . . calculating . . .* forty-two!

Each pack includes seven different cards, including a holo (that's right, a holo in every pack!). There's a "Check List" card in every pack—that's counted as one of the original seven—that can help you keep track of your collection. And every card comes in a foil holo version. Now there's also something called a PowerDeck card that comes one to a case for hobby stores. I tried to get my hands on one of those, but the guy at the store said, "Hey, don't touch that!" Basically this super-duper card is really a CD-ROM that you can load into your computer. What will they think of next? Anyway, these will probably start showing up at hobby stores in the glass case.

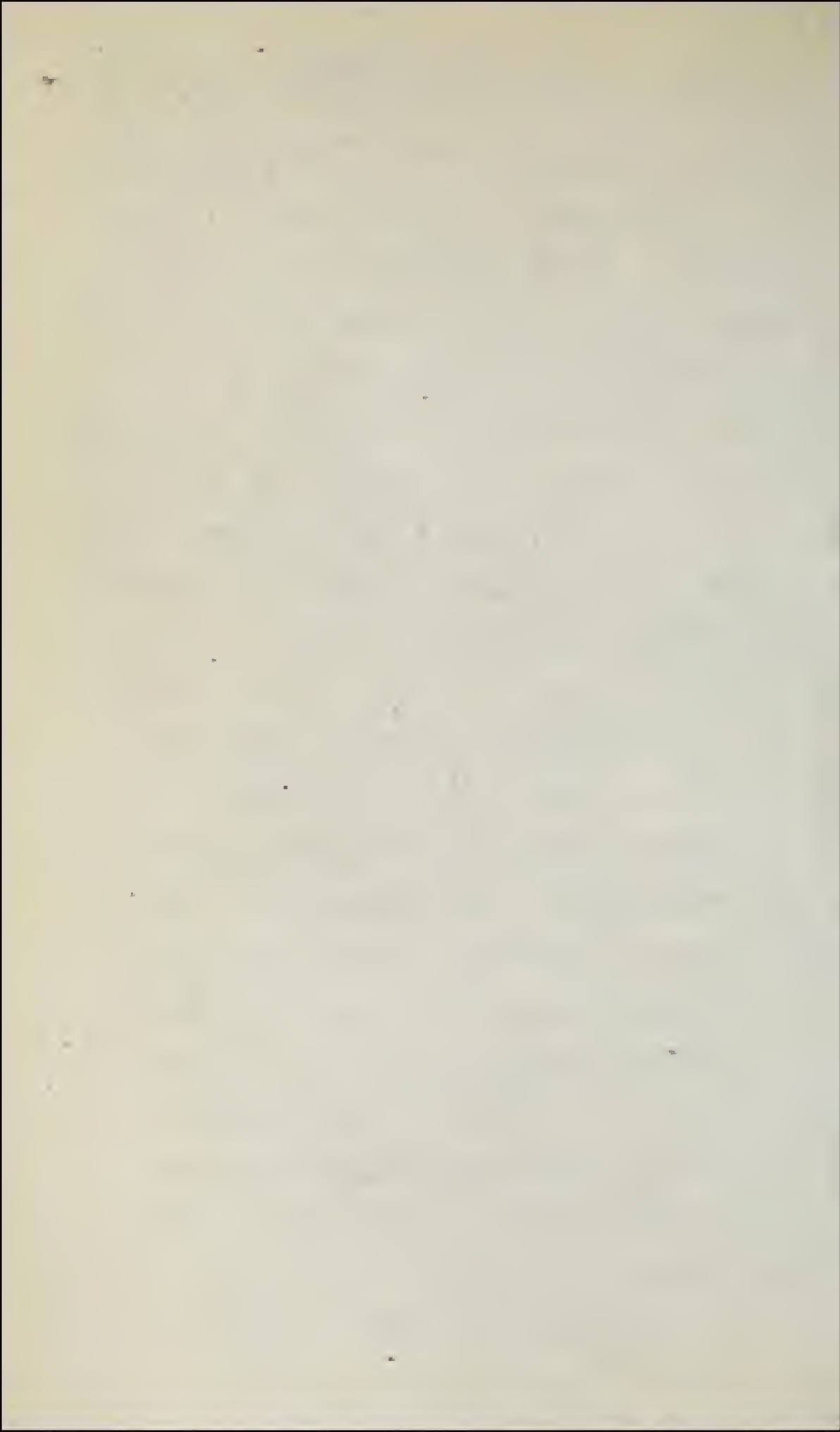
And, just so you know, the Digi-Battle cards start with a basic starter set of forty-eight Digimon cards and fourteen "Power Option" cards. There are forty-eight different Digimon cards and fourteen differ-

ent Power Option cards. That's a total of. . . *calculating*. . . *calculating* . . . sixty-two! No doubt expansion packs will be available soon. So, there will likely be more cards for the strategy game.

Both sets of cards, both the Digi-Battle strategy game cards and the collector cards are both made by a company called Upper Deck, the same guys who make sports trading cards.

The Digimon cards are different from the Pokémon cards because every single Digimon card can be in holographic, but only some Pokémon cards are in holographic. You can try to get all the Digimon cards in holographics. I like Digimon cards better maybe because they have better graphics and cooler backgrounds.

—Scott



IS ONE SET OF CARDS MORE VALUABLE THAN THE OTHER?

THIS WAS A QUESTION THAT HAS PLAGUED mankind since the very dawn of history. Okay, maybe not the dawn of history and maybe not even the dawn of trading cards.

Heck, when I was a kid we used to fasten trading cards on the wheels of our bikes with clothespins to make a cool motorcycle noise. Now kids lock their cards into air-tight, climate-controlled, heavily guarded vaults surrounded by armed guards and really angry attack dogs. That's the trouble with kids today, no respect for the traditions!

Anyway, I've said it once and I'll say it

again . . . trading cards are only worth what someone is willing to pay for them. It doesn't matter what is written in books or magazines or on the Internet. A trading card is only as valuable as what someone else will pay.

A few months ago I was in a hobby store that once sold single Pokémon cards for a hundred dollars or more. The same cards were selling for \$10.00 and \$20.00.

Yes, some baseball cards do sell for a lot of money, but not all of them. Plus, it is adults mostly buying the really expensive cards.

The point I am trying to make is that card collecting is fun. It's fun to collect and trade cards. And it's fun to learn about the characters. But I wouldn't count on making a lot of money from the cards.

ARE COLLECTOR CARDS AND STRATEGY CARD GAMES BAD?

I HAVE TO SAY, HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK they are bad. But I also have to say that some parents don't like them for a lot of very good reasons. And these parents, quite naturally, don't want their kids to have the cards, play the strategy games or even the video games.

Everyone's parents have different rules. That's a fact of life. So you should respect those rules. If a kid you know has parents who won't let him play video games or strategy card games, I think you should re-

spect the kid and his parents and not offer that kid cards or a video game match . . . even when he or she is at your house. This is just good manners.

DRAGONBALL Z

I heard that Dragonball was based on some folk tales. That's pretty cool, so I went to the library and got a book of Chinese folk tales. Some of them were pretty cool.

—Willy

NOT AS MANY KIDS WATCH *DRAGONBALL Z* as watch Pokémon or Digimon, so it may not be familiar to a lot of you. Plus, it is currently on cable TV only. However, it is a fun show, though it can be violent. So,

check with your parents before tuning in—I MEAN IT!

The first thing you should know about *Dragonball Z* (or just DBZ as the fans of the show say) is that it is based on one of Japan's the most popular manga (remember, that's a Japanese comic book) called *Dragonball*. The manga started in 1984 and was a big hit almost immediately. It continued until 1995 when *Dragonball Z* started.

In the first comics the hero, Goku, is a kid. Well, he may be just a kid, but he has a big job. He wants to collect all seven of the magic dragonballs, because if he collects them all, then he gets a wish from the giant dragon. Then according to legend, after he makes his wish, the balls scatter around the world again for the next person to find them and bring them together. Cool, huh?

If you think about it, it's kind of like Aladdin and the magic lamp and a lot of other stories. Plus, the idea of someone

heading out on a "mission" is a very common plot in stories all around the world. In fact, *Dragonball* is said to be based on an ancient Asian story.

Goku never really feels as if he fits in and longs for adventure. So, it isn't surprising that he leaves home on a quest to find the seven magical dragonballs. At first he isn't really a warrior or anything like that. He mostly helps people, makes friends and enemies. In fact, a lot of the stuff in this series is just silly. But slowly, he gets better and better at his combat skills. It's a lot like Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*. And, by the time *Dragonball Z* begins, he's a real warrior.

Now, here's the really interesting thing . . . the manga was so popular that they made it into a television show. The show ran for more than 500 episodes in Japan. That's a lot of TV. But what is different from Japanese cartoons than American cartoons is that Goku grew up during the show! Compare it to say, *The Simpsons*.

Bart, Lisa and Maggie never get any older, except in a couple of shows where they imagine themselves older. In *Dragonball*, Goku not only got older, but he got smarter and stronger, too. He learns a lot of lessons and gets much better at fighting.

The show changes when Goku defeats his arch enemy. That's when *Dragonball Z* kicks in. Now Goku is not only all grown up, but has kids—two sons, Gohan and Goten.

I don't want to spoil the story for anyone, so I won't say much more about the series. It is important to remember that there are three series in all: *Dragonball*, *Dragonball Z* and *Dragonball GT*.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Goku: The hero of the series, Goku is a good-natured kid who often finds himself in some real funny and dangerous situations on his search for the Dragonball.

Gohan and Goten: are Goku's sons and don't appear until the *Dragonball Z* series:

Bulma: She's Goku's friend and helps him on his adventure.

Shenlon (sometimes spelled Shen Long or Shenlon): the "genie dragon" who will

appear to grant a wish to whoever can collect all seven dragonballs.

Piccolo: Goku's first enemy. He was also looking for the dragonballs.

Kuririn: A monk who trains Goku and becomes his friend.

Frieza: An alien baddie who wants to control the universe.

Cell: A robot baddie.

Majin Buu: The ultimate baddie of DBZ. He can transform himself to fight.

The Saiyan: An alien race of warriors.

Vegeta (sometimes spelled Vegita): A Saiyan prince and warrior.

DBZ and the other shows are about being brave and making mistakes. They are also about how everyone deserves a second chance and that when you face a really tough challenge, afterwards you are better for doing it.

I liked the beginning shows much better, when Goku did all the funny stuff. Later on, with DBZ the shows got much more serious and not as funny.

—Willy

DRAGONBALL GT

THIS IS THE LAST INSTALLMENT OF THE Dragonball saga. It's one of those shows that you either like or don't like. I know a lot of kids who loved the first two segments—*Dragonball* and *Dragonball Z*, but hated *Dragonball GT*. And, I also know a lot of kids who loved all of them. So, it really is a matter of taste.

The plot of the GT series is that Goku kinda makes a mistake and wishes himself back to being a kid. Oops! The only way he can wish himself back to being a grown up is to gather the extra special dragonballs scattered around the universe. So, it's

off he goes in search of the dragonballs from planet to planet and adventure to adventure. That's how the "GT" part of the title came about. GT means Grand Tour.

THE GREAT DBZ DEBATE!

OKAY, LET'S SETTLE THIS ONCE AND FOR all! Is it Dragon Ball and Dragon Ball Z or is it Dragonball and Dragonball Z? If you've been looking at Websites and comics and even toys, you are likely to see it spelled both ways—with and without the space between the dragon and the ball. Confusing, ain't it?

The official comics spell it Dragon Ball—with the space. But then a lot of the toys and other stuff spell it Dragonball.

I cast my vote for the space, sometimes.

Other times it's okay to spell it without the space.

So, just to make a choice and not confuse readers, I've spelled it without the space.

DBZ TRADING CARDS AND OTHER STUFF

There's a lot of stuff out there for DBZ and the other shows, like Digimon. I like the battle figures and cards best. We went to a couple of the comic stores and one of the guys there was like the comic book store guy in the Simpsons. But mostly the guys there were pretty nice.

—Willy

HEY, WHAT WOULD A TELEVISION SHOW BE without a bunch of stuff to buy? It would be just a television show, right? I mean, if

you can't put on your (name your favorite show) pajamas and drink out of your (name your favorite show) sippy straw and eat from your (name your favorite show) lunchbox with pictures of your favorite heroes drawn into your bologna with hot mustard, then what's the point of even turning on the TV? Just this morning I trimmed my old-man nose hairs with a turbocharged, water-cooled, all-aluminum, patented high-speed clipper with a picture of my favorite superheroes on it. So, yes, there is a ton of Dragonball Z stuff out there—but they haven't released a nose-hair clipper yet. I'm still waiting for that one.

You can get Dragonball Z trading cards; Dragonball Z action battle figures; Dragonball Z comic books (American versions of manga) and even the Dragonball and Dragonball Z videotapes or DVDs.

Right now there are three major trading card sets available. The first DBZ set offers sixty cards packed in jackets of nine stan-

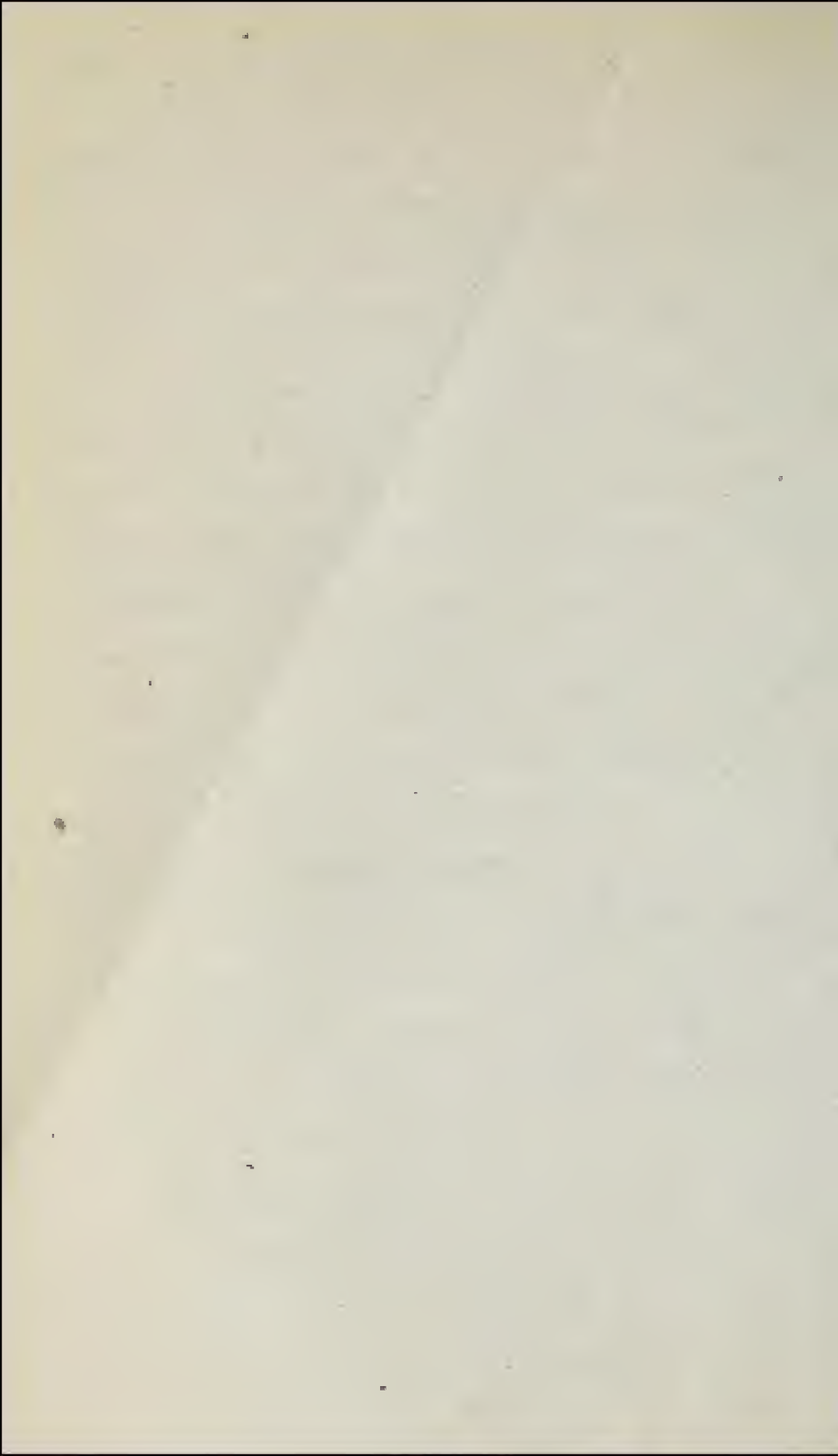
dard cards and one holographic card. So, each pack gives you one holo.

The second DBZ set is an eighty-six-card collection with nine cards to the pack, plus one metallic card.

The third DBZ set is another eighty-six-card collection that also comes in nine-packs with a metallic card. However, this set also includes "rare" clear chaser cards.

All these sets come with Japanese artwork and English writing.

However, there are also a lot of Japanese version cards out there for DBZ. Remember, the show and manga were huge hits in Japan—and around the world—so, if you go looking for DBZ stuff at your local hobby store or comic shop, there's no telling what you might find.



THE VIDEOS

YES, YES, YES, YOU CAN BUY THE VIDEOS of the shows. And believe me, there are a lot of them. In fact, there are too many of them to list here. Now this is something you have to be careful about—since the shows were originally aired in Japan, there are several different versions available. One kind of version available is dubbed. That means English-speaking actors do the voices. Another type of version available is subtitled. That means the original actors' voices (in Japanese) are on

the tape or DVD and the English words appear as writing at the bottom of the screen. If you can't read that quickly yet, make sure you get the "dubbed" version of the show.

THE COMICS, UH, MANGA

OKAY, I'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT MANGA in this book. And, as luck would have it, you can get manga in English. A company called Viz Comics is publishing both Dragonball and Dragonball Z in manga format. This is the same company that did the Pokémon comic.

The comics feature the same story and artwork by the same artist, but in English. If you're a comic book fan, then these should be very interesting to you. For one thing, they are printed in the traditional manga format. That is to say, you will feel like you are reading from the back of the

book to the front. Secondly, you'll notice that the panels—the screen where the drawings appear—are kind of different. There might be three different sized panels on a page. Some of them might be long and tall and others short and square. Some pages might have five or six or more kind of small panels while other pages have only two or three panels. All of this is in the manga style. I think it's pretty interesting.

A NOTE TO PARENTS

DRAGONBALL AND DRAGONBALL Z TELEVISION shows and comics are both based on very popular Japanese manga (Japanese comic book stories). Because of this fact, there might be cultural differences in story telling that some parents may find objectionable. These might include stories that deal with the fighting themes portrayed in some of the episodes as well as depictions of death and magic.

I would also advise parents that the tone of the show shifts from Dragonball to Dragonball Z. Where *Dragonball* offered a steady helping of slapstick and often inno-

cent humor, *Dragonball Z*'s emphasis was often on battles. As with all entertainment, *Dragonball* and *Dragonball Z* should be previewed by parents before kids are allowed to watch.

MONSTER RANCHER

My favorite show is definitely Monster Ranchers. I like it best because there's all this action and there's characters that are weird things. There's characters that are kids, there are monsters, there's a lot of excitement. It's cool. Pokémon is like played out, not so good anymore. It's like not fun anymore. The TV shows are all right, but they show all these reruns and it gets boring. I like Monster Ranchers more than Digimon because it's

different. It's cooler, more exciting, more action. In Digimon they sometimes do stupid stuff and jump in the air and wave for a taxi and stand there for twenty seconds. Digimon is weird and Monster Rancher is weird too, but in Monster Rancher they don't jump in the air and go "Taxi, Taxi."

—Adin

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE TAKEN THE TIME to either watch the Monster Rancher TV show or play one of the two games out there, but believe me, it is well worth the time. The TV show has great characters and great action. As for the video game, well, it's like nothing you've ever played before! And the game is popular—not as popular as Pokémon or Digimon—but still popular. Kids who are fans of the game are really, really fans.

Now that there's a Monster Rancher

cartoon on TV, and I've heard rumors of Monster Rancher trading cards, I'm sure the game will be getting more fans.

A little like Pokémon, a little like a Tamagotchi and even a little like *Dragonball*, the Playstation game is one of those games you can play and play and play and never get bored. For instance, in Monster Rancher you have to raise the little critters and train them to be good fighters and workers. You also have to take them out on expeditions to find items that are useful for them and you.

One of the reasons it is such a great video game is because it combines so many different kinds of things. You have to raise your monsters to the right age before you can have them fight. Plus, there is also a calendar built into the game, so the monsters grow and learn according to a "calendar."

And, the third thing, which really got everyone's attention, is the way you create the monsters. Since PlayStation was a disc

system, the guys who came up with Monster Rancher really put on their thinking caps . . . you create monsters by putting music disks into the unit. That's right, just slip in your latest rock, pop or even classical CD and create a monster. The system reads the disc's number and track lengths to make a monster. And, since track lengths and numbers of them are different on almost every CD, well, there's a lot of opportunity for the creators to create a lot of monsters. Cool, huh?

So, right now there are two Monster Rancher games out, Monster Rancher and Monster Rancher 2. But rumor says that there are more on the way, and one of them for a handheld.

In Monster Ranchers, I like Tiger and the Centaur people because they look cool. Tiger looks like a wolf with white and blue fur and all pointy and he has two horns sticking up and

pointing forward. The Centaur people look like the bottom of a horse, the middle is a person and the mouth is a beak. The face looks like a person aside from the beak. Mulchee, a pink monster, is cute.

—Adin

THE TV SHOW

In Monster Ranchers, they don't evolve or digivolve. Monster Ranchers is probably the most realistic one of the shows. The plot is good, the TV show is good; it's the best.

—Adin

THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD KNOW IS that unlike a lot of TV shows that have the same title and characters as a video game, Monster Rancher was a video game first—in Japan it was called Monster Farmer. Then it became a manga and then a TV

show. And then the sequel to the video game, *Monster Rancher 2*, came out.

Why is this important? It's important because the writers actually put the *Monster Rancher* video game into the show.

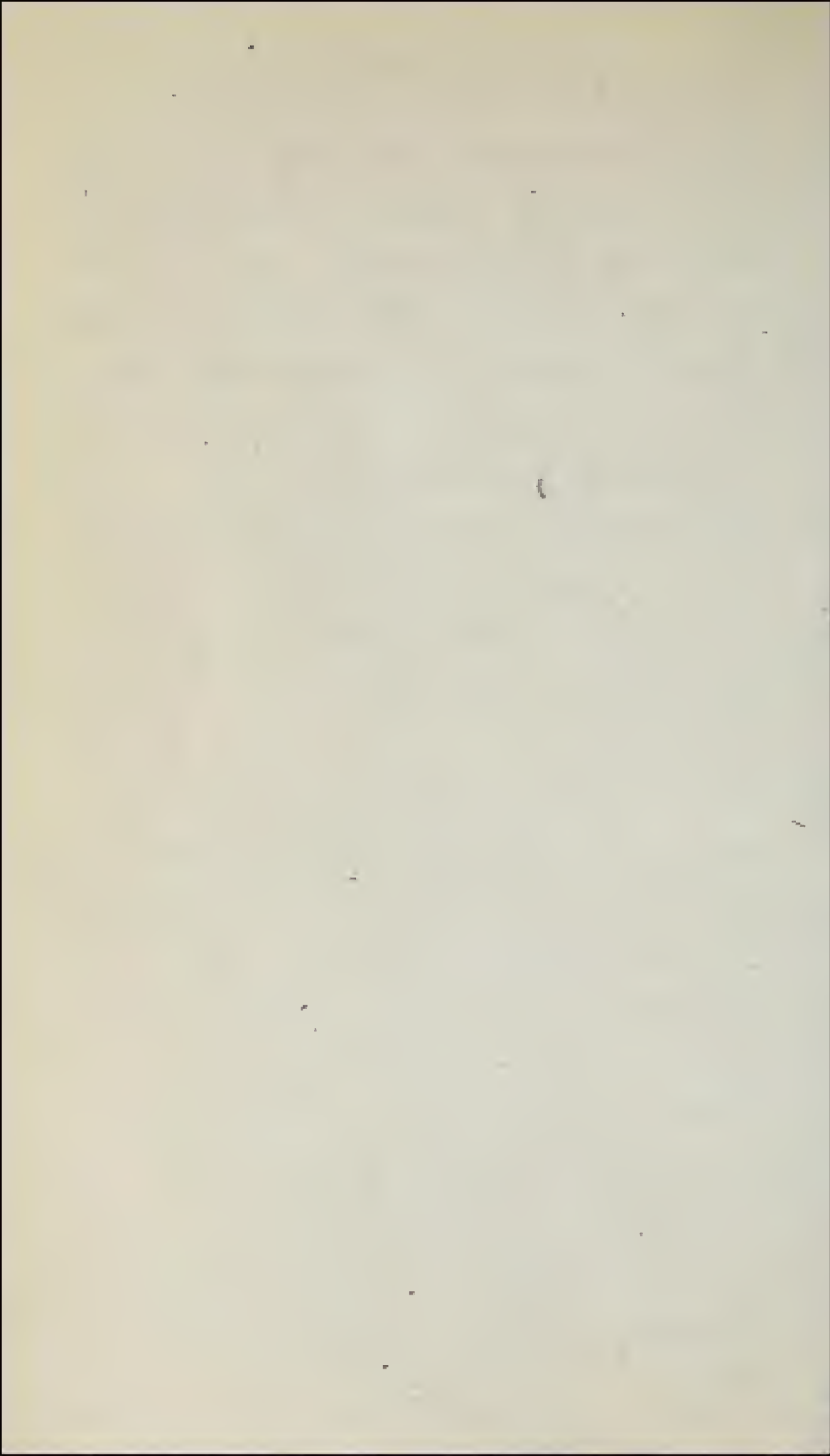
The show is like this—Genki is a kid who loves the video game *Monster Rancher*. As a matter of fact, he's a champ at it. One day, he gets a disk and inserts it into his game system. Suddenly—whamo!—he's sucked into the TV and the game.

Once inside the game he meets a young girl named Holly and her pet monster, Suezo. Almost immediately he has to help them escape a pack of bad monsters. Once they are safe, she explains the situation to him.

Holly and Suezo are searching for the legendary and mythical Phoenix—no, Phoenix is not a city—it is a creature that will help her defeat the evil Moo. You see, Moo has turned all the good monsters bad.

The Phoenix exists on a mystery disk and without the Phoenix, Moo will succeed in his evil plans. Of course Genki agrees to help them—hey, what else does he have to do, right?—and they set off on their adventure after Genki unlocks a pet monster of his own, named Mocchi.

The show features some really great anime and a ton of exciting plots.



MONSTER RANCHER

EPISODE GUIDE

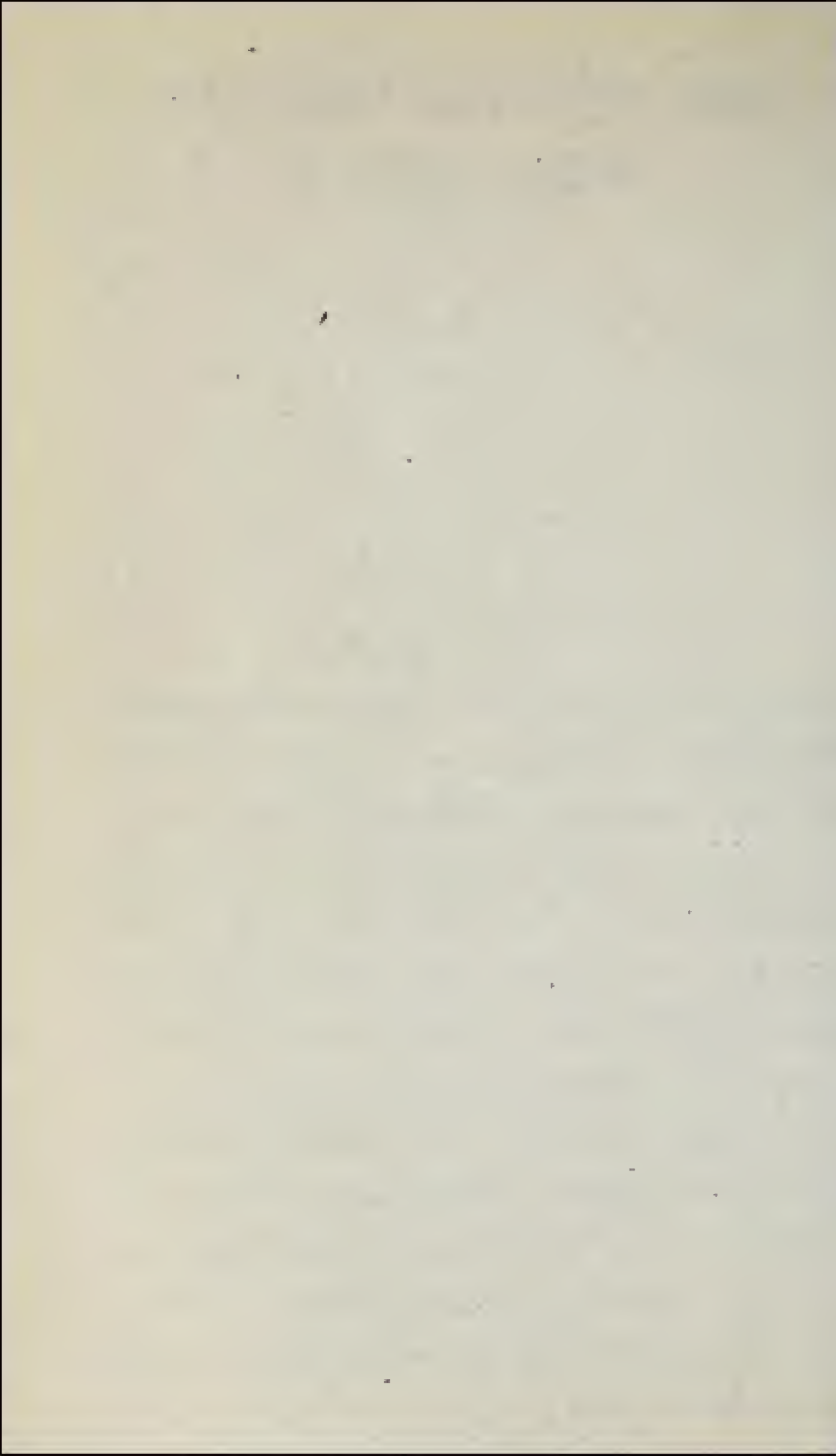
- #1.** In The Beginning
- #2.** I'm Mocchi!
- #3.** Guardian of the Disks
- #4.** Eternal Worm
- #5.** Tiger of the Wind
- #6.** Hare's Trick
- #7.** The Courageous Seven
- #8.** After the Rain
- #9.** The Iron Bird
- #10.** The Ruins' Secret
- #11.** Monol's Story
- #12.** Moo Revealed
- #13.** Pixie's Defeat
- #14.** Holly's Rescue

- #15. A New Departure
- #16. Underground Adventure
- #17. Great Battle at Sea
- #18. Suez's Secret Weapon
- #19. My Name is Pixie
- #20. The Mocchi Cannon
- #21. Run, Tiger, Run!
- #22. Don't Give Up, Ducken!
- #23. Our Friend Henger Forever
- #24. Warriors of the Ruins
- #25. Undine's Lake
- #26. Melcarba

THE MONSTER RANCHER VIDEO GAMES

IT HELPS A LOT IF YOU THINK OF MONSTER Rancher (the original one) as an over-sized Tamagotchi meets Pokémon. You have a couple of things you have to do. The first thing is to raise the critters up to be happy and healthy. If you've played Pokémon (and who hasn't?) then you already know the basics about collecting and raising digital critters, exploring new worlds and battling. However, Monster Rancher is much more complex than Pokémon. So, pay attention.

If you are already an experienced Monster Rancher, then this stuff might seem a little basic. Sorry.



MONSTERS, MONSTERS AND MORE MONSTERS!

THERE ARE A DOZEN—THAT'S TWELVE
for those of you who flunked math—COM-
MON OR BASIC TYPES OF MONSTERS. THESE
ARE PRETTY EASY TO FIND. THEY ARE:

Dino	Suezo
Golem	Hare
Tiger	Gali
Pixie	Monol
Worm	Naga
Jell	Plant

Plus, there are eight breeds you can only
get as rewards for becoming a good

trainer or accomplishing some task in the game. These rare breeds are:

Dragon

Magic

Henger

Nya

Ape

Ghost

Doodle

Disk

Sounds, simple, right. Wrong. Because all these different breeds can be combined to create new types of monsters. For instance, you get a Grape by combining a Dino and a Naga. Or, you can get a Black Rex by combining a Dino and Monol. And if you combine a Tiger and Worm you get a Yakuto. You get the idea. There's a couple hundred monsters out there for you to train and battle. And remember, don't be shy—try every CD you can think of putting into the PlayStation. Load in other games, old Math Blasters CDs that even your little brother won't play with anymore. Load in your parents' CDs—you never know, they might get a

thrill out of what kind of monsters their music creates. Just don't load in any of your teenaged sister's CDs, because it'll create a monster that won't get off the phone and takes a long, long time in the bathroom. . . . okay, I was just kidding about that last one. Really, it's fun to experiment with CDs, you'll be surprised at what happens.

The second thing you should know is that your monster has a set life period. Eventually the monster will go to that big ranch in the sky. However, you can extend your monsters' lives by taking good care of them. If you don't take good care of them and feed them the right foods or allow them to rest, then they won't live as long. Like I said, this game is a lot like a Tamagotchi.

Before you got into battle, you have to raise a decent monster. Now, remember, this is a major part of the game. And, unlike other games, you only have a certain amount of time to accomplish the task.

Monster Rancher has a clock inside that marks the weeks. So, your monster gets older and older as the clock ticks away.

These are the attributes you need your monster to have:

STATS YOU NEED TO KNOW

Pow. = Power: You want as much as possible. Really go for the gold. This will help not only in the fighting part of the game, but also when you take your monster out on expeditions. Think of what you could do with a supercharged Pikachu.

Lif. = Life Points. Again, as much as you can get into the critter at least more than 250. This means your creature will live longer in battle.

Def. = Defensive Power. You're monster won't get hurt as much. Try to get at

least 150 or more. He'll have more stamina in battle.

Skl. = Skill. He becomes a more accurate fighter. At least 500. He'll land more blows.

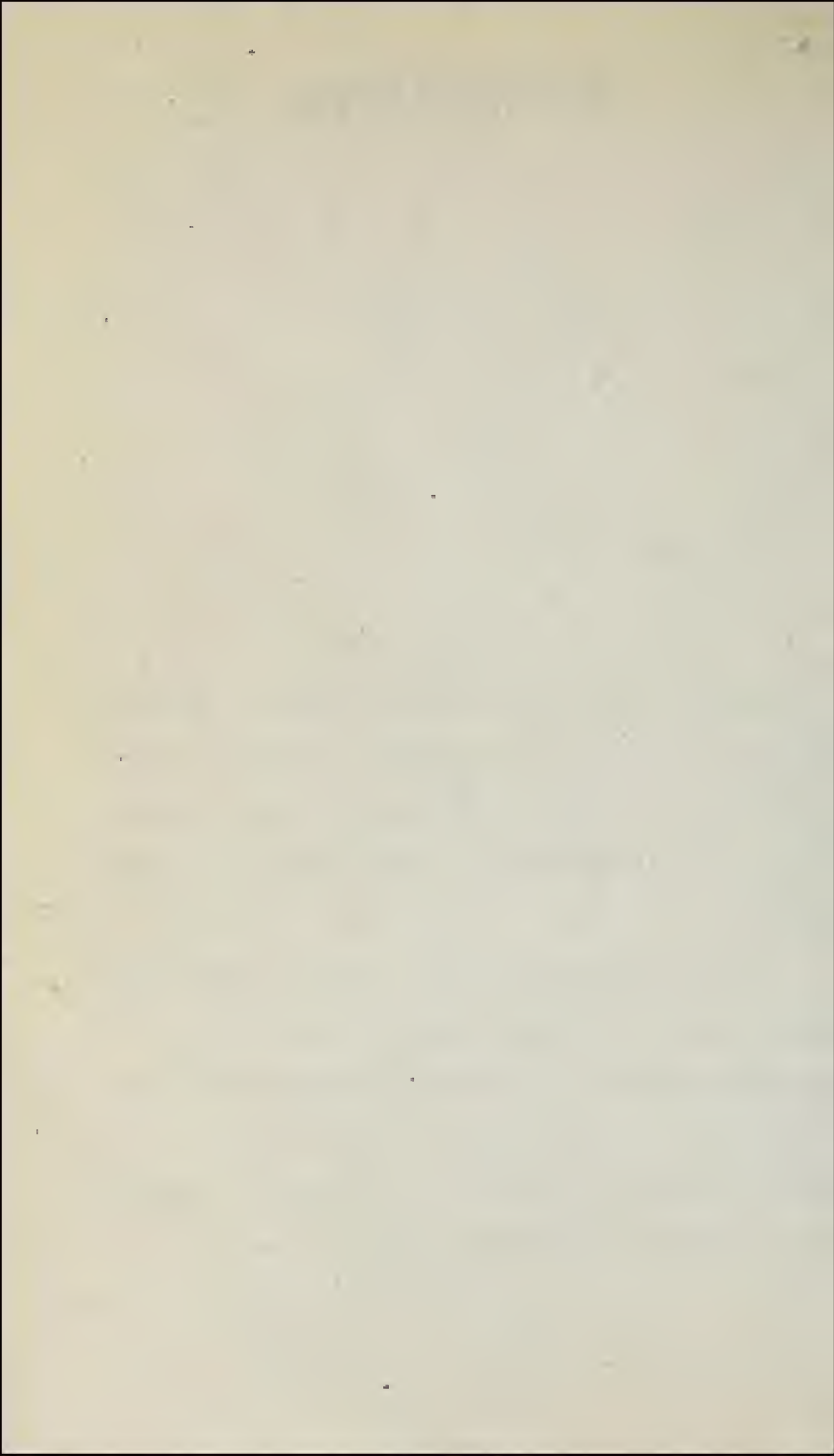
Spd. = Speed. Helps him move quickly when attacked. More than 400.

Int. = Intelligence: Hey, the smarter the better, right? This will help in every part of the game, from training to Expeditions to battles.

Your monster should be well rounded. Don't build up one attribute and ignore all the others. This will not help you win the game.

I know it's tempting to try to build up one attribute over the others, but it is important to have a well-rounded monster. Remember, the best colleges look at all activities when considering applicants. Okay, I'm kidding, but it is important to

remember that even if you are training your monsters to fight—that intelligence comes in awful handy in a battle. A smart monster will get hurt less often.



CARE AND TRAINING

FIRST OFF, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT IF you get your monster too tired by either working or going out on Expeditions, then he won't live as long. So make sure your monster is up for the job—by checking all the stat levels—before doing anything tough.

Avoid the vitamins! That's right, vitamins may be good for everyone else, but they can shorten a monster's life. Also, taffy or candy will shorten a monster's life. In fact, if you breed two monsters whose lives you've shortened, then you'll get a

monster with a short life span. The more pills the shorter his life span.

A happy monster is a monster that will live longer. If the scale tips a little toward spoiled—but not too much!—then he'll be happy. The way you do this is by rewarding him with meat once a year and a sweet treat, like apple cakes after he has done a good job or won a battle.

There are other foods you can feed your monster to extend his life: the Plant Egg and the even more rare Gold Peach. Both of these items are in the jungle.

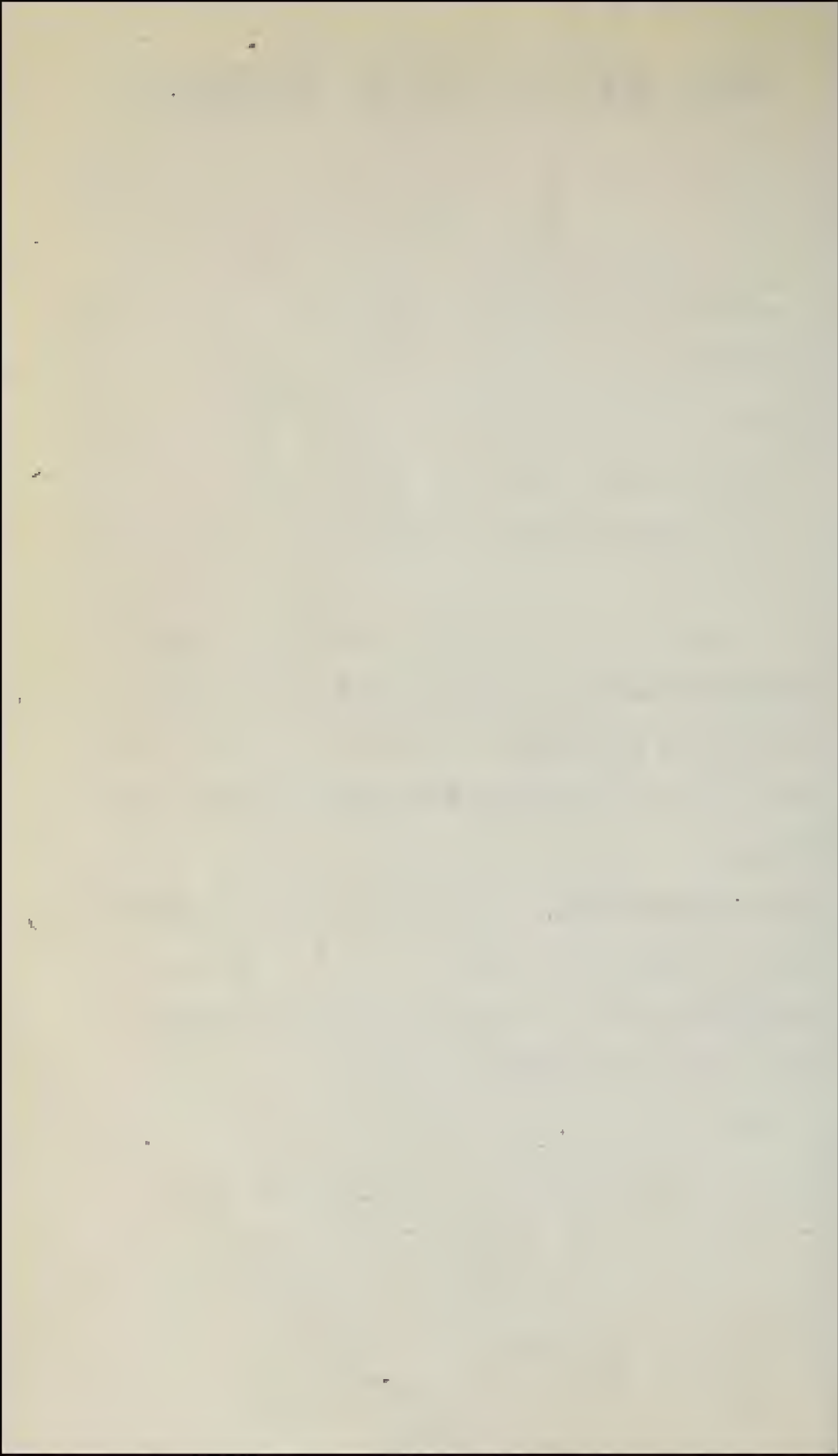
YOU NEED THESE THINGS!

Calm Stone: Big stress reducer. You'll find it in Harville.

Fire Stone: Eliminates fatigue. Find it in Titus.

Wind Drum: Better training. You should find it on Reno trek.

Wind Whistle: Increases monster's life span. On the Reno journey.



TRICKS AND TIPS

Save That Monster!: When a monster is close to the end of the line, don't make it do work or go into battle. Freeze it for breeding in the future.

Pure Breeding: If you want a pure monster, then use a CD that only has one track on it, like a classical symphony or a computer program to create the monster.

Money Matters: Alternate work and battles for money. Too much work or too many battles can have the same effect of fatiguing and shortening the life span of

a monster. Better to raise specialists, so that you can alternate sources of money.

Don't Be Too Strict: Don't punish your monster for every mistake, especially when he is young. He will grow up unhappy and have a short life. Punish only one out of four or five mistakes. Soon he'll be making fewer and fewer mistakes! Plus, he'll be much happier! If you find your discipline stats going too high, then feed the monster an apple cake.

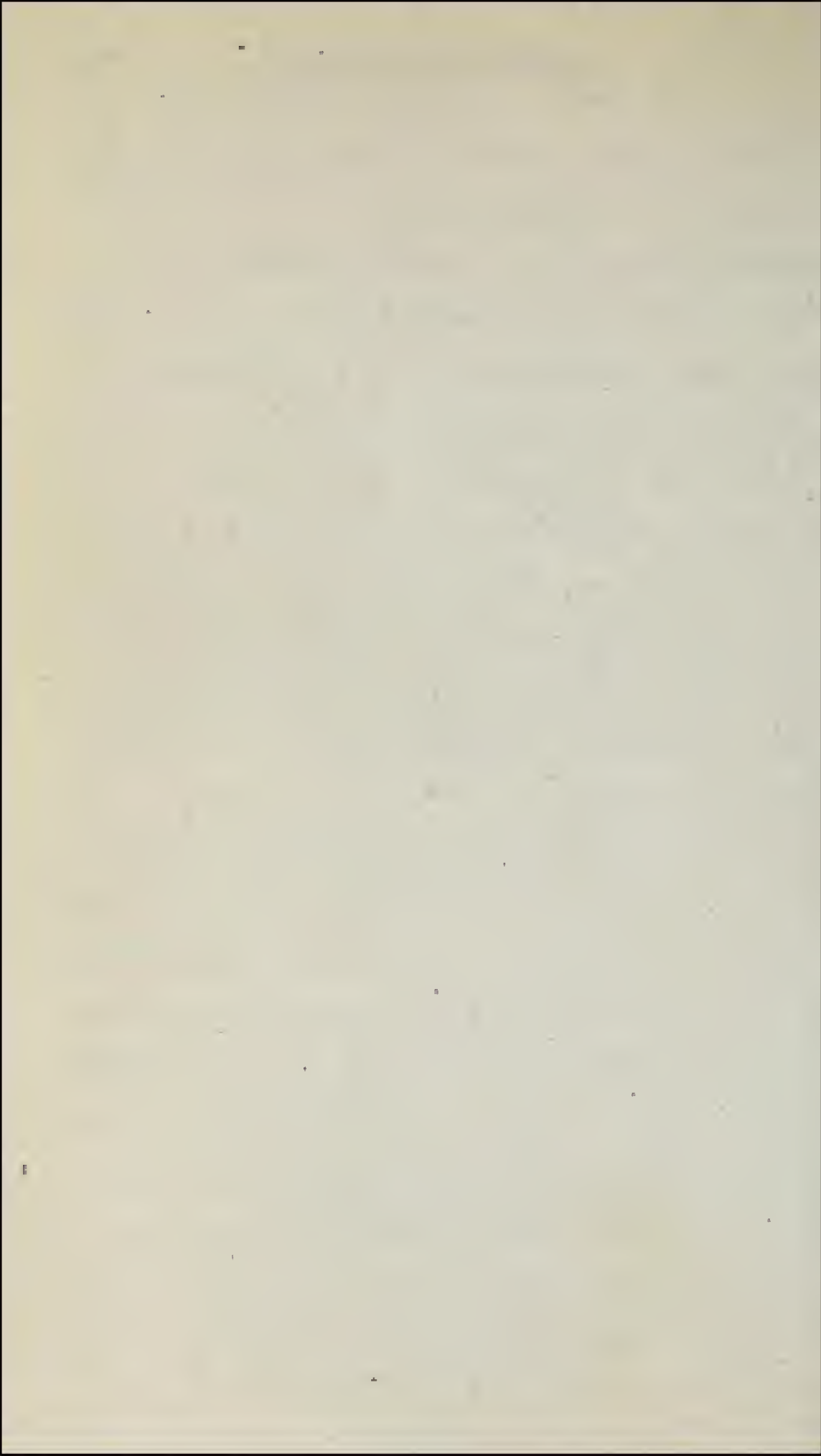
Throw in the Towel: Press L2 and R2 at the same time to end a battle in an emergency.

Secret Song: The second track of the game disk has a secret song. Play it on a standard CD player!

Loyal: Before starting to train your monster be sure his loyalty scale is high! One trick is to keep bringing him back and forth between the ranch and town.

When he returns to the ranch his loyalty measure will increase.

Expeditions: Yes, traveling around the Monster Rancher world is fun. Plus, you can get valuable stuff that will help you a lot during the game. However, you'll fail in the Expeditions unless you have a monster suitable to help you out. When you go out on Expeditions, you need a monster with levels of 500 or 600 in Int., Skl. and Pwr. These attributes will help in finding hidden items and removing obstacles.



MONSTER RANCHER 2

LET'S FACE IT, A LOT OF FOLLOW-UPS ARE kind of bad. This is true for television shows, movies and even video games. You know what I'm talking about, right? The first movie comes out, say it's called *Screaming Lizards from Snot Planet*. And it's great—the screaming lizards are great. The palace of the Snot King on Snot Planet is great. The battle scenes are great—though somewhat disgusting. And of course, about 7,000 kids in your neighborhood dress like either a Screaming Lizard or the Snot King for Halloween. Then about a year later, the *Screaming Lizards*

from *Snot Planet 2* comes out. And guess what? Yep, it stinks.

Well, I'm glad to report that *Monster Rancher 2* does not stink. I repeat: *Monster Rancher 2* does not stink. If anything, it's even better than the first game.

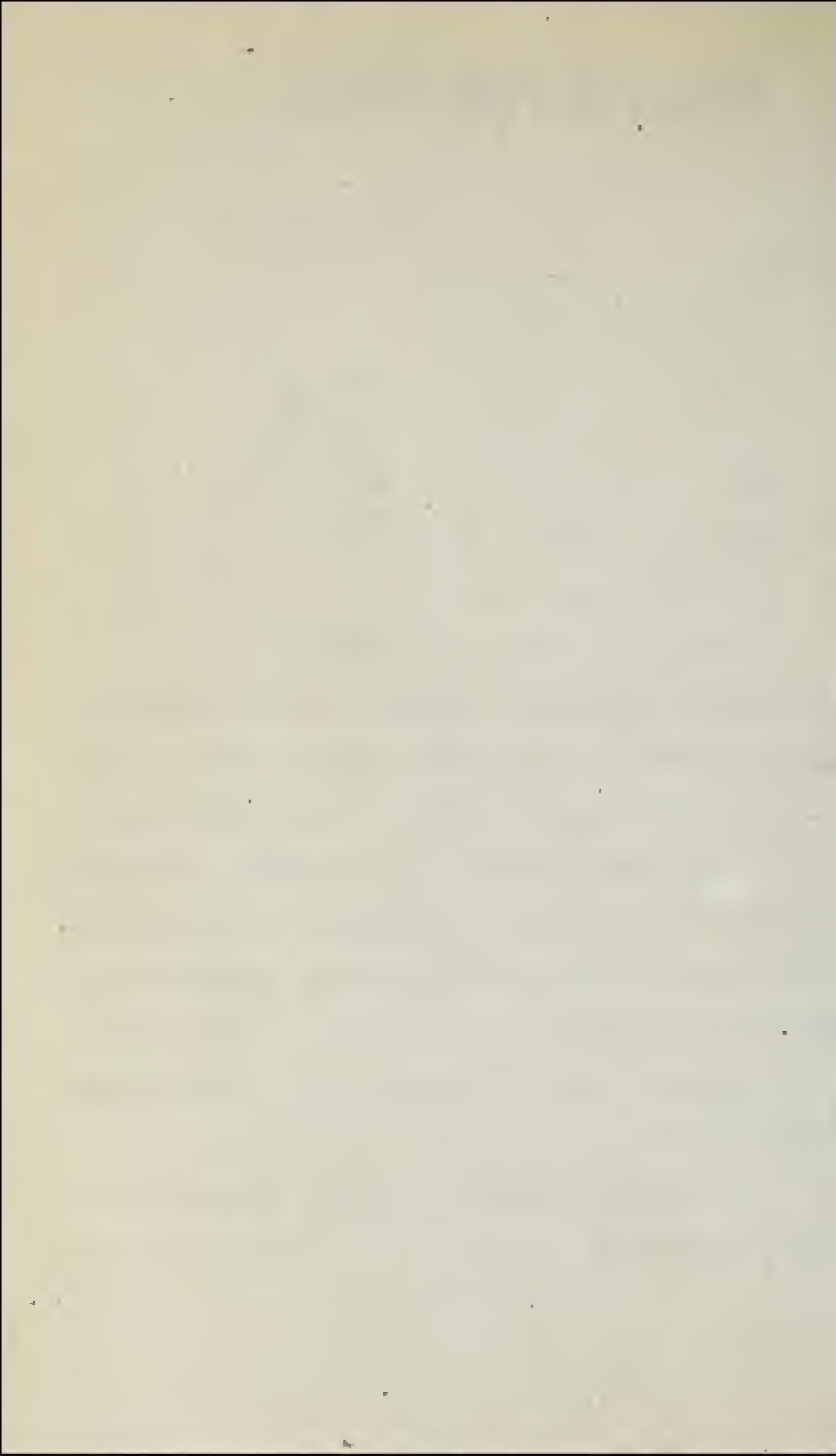
For one thing, the graphics in the follow-up game are much better. And, for another thing, there are a lot more monsters. In all, there are over 400 total monsters to raise.

So, you're going to enjoy this game whether you are familiar with the original *Monster Rancher* or new to monster ranching. However, if you find the controls a little too difficult, you might want to "practice" on the original. That is to say, the controls are a little more difficult in the newer game.

WHAT'S THE SAME . . .

THE BEST PARTS OF THE ORIGINAL GAME are still in Monster Rancher 2. You can still create a monster by using any CD. You still raise, train, battle and explore with the monsters. And, of course, you have to raise the stats of your monster in order to battle and win fame and collect valuable items, including new and rare monsters.

All of this is pretty much the same from the first game.



SO, WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

I CAN ANSWER THAT IN TWO WORDS: A lot. That means a lot of time and thought went into creating the second Monster Rancher game. Perhaps it was the legions of loyal fans of the first game or the improved game technology out there or simply because the designers wanted to do a great job, but this is one of the best sequel or follow-up games I've ever seen.

For one thing, as I said, the graphics are a lot better. There's pure 3-D graphics in Monster Rancher 2.

In the original Monster Rancher you were breeding for FIMBA. In Monster

Rancher 2 you are breeding monsters for IMA, the main competition in the original game.

You can now "cheat" on drills to earn points, but not that many and training with drills does not provide money. And, there are an increased number of stats. Also, the Loyalty stat is much more important in the second game. And, Loyalty is related to whether your monster is spoiled or not. A spoiled monster is not very loyal.

And remember, you can make money by battling wild monsters.

TIPS FOR MONSTER RANCHER 2

The Lab: Go to the lab often as your monster grows to have him analyzed for his hidden properties.

The Store: Keep visiting the shop as the seasons and years in the game change, you'll find new items for sale. These items are useful for creating new monsters.

Dead and Back Again: When you create a new monster just after another monster has died, the new monster might have some of the qualities of the dead monster. This is good and bad, because the

new monster who has the qualities of a dead monster will not live as long.

Team Battles: To increase the types of monsters you raise, compete in team battles against FIMBA. If you win, then you can raise some FIMBA-type monsters.

Spoiled: If your monster is spoiled, then he will not train very well.

MONSTERS ON THE INTERNET

THERE'S A TON OF STUFF OUT THERE ON THE internet about Pokémon, Digimon, Dragonball, Monster Rancher and just about anything else you can think of plugging into a search engine. Some of these sites are put up by fans and some of them by the company or companies that sell the products.

The Internet is a great thing when it comes to video games and anime. It can help you learn about the game or the show and even about Japanese culture. That's the good news. The bad news is that you have to be careful when you are surfing the Net.

Now I kid around and get goofy about a lot of stuff in these video game books. I think they should be fun to read. But Internet safety is something I never joke about. Ever. Kids should be as safe as possible and that means when they are out there on the Internet, too. I never joke around about it. So this is a serious chapter.

If you read the last book, this chapter will look very familiar. The rules of safety haven't changed. Read it again, just to make sure you have all the basic rules down. Your parents, of course, might have additional rules that you should follow, but these are the very basics.

Good safety on the Internet is the same as good safety anywhere. You would not accept candy from strangers, so why accept computer downloads from strangers. Of course, sometimes on the Internet you do "talk" to strangers, so that's why you have to be really, really careful. People who seem "nice" online can turn out to be really bad. So you have to be extra careful.

BASIC INTERNET RULES

- 1.** Never, ever give anyone on the Internet any private information. That means never give them your real name, your address, telephone number or even the name of your school or the town where you live. That includes e-mail and posting it on a home page, too.
- 2.** If anyone online posts anything to you that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell your parents immediately.
- 3.** Never ever agree to "get together" or meet anyone in person who you met online.
- 4.** Never agree to send anyone you have "met" online a picture of yourself.

5. Never accept any downloads or computer programs from someone you don't personally know.
6. Stay in public or open places on the Net. Avoid "private" conversations via e-mail or other means.
7. Don't fill out those "profile" forms in chat rooms or anywhere else.

AND REMEMBER . . .

THESE ARE ONLY THE VERY BASIC RULES. If your parents have additional rules, be sure to follow those rules, too.

THE VIDEO GAME (Sort of)

OKAY, HERE'S THE DEAL, GUYS. THE straight stuff. I really wanted to include a full-scale, blow-'em-outta-the-water chapter on Digimon World, the video game for the PlayStation. But guess what? The game wasn't released in the U.S. yet. I know, it's a real pain. So, here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna tell you everything I know about the Japanese version of the video game that was released earlier.

Now, as you probably know, Japanese versions of video games can be a lot different from American versions. A lot of the codes and names and stuff like that can be

different. I don't want to confuse anyone or frustrate them, so I didn't include the codes. This is basically a review of the game based on what I've heard from my friends in Japan.

First off, the game graphics—the picture—in Digimon World is really outstanding. We're talking full-color, 3-D type pictures like you'd see on big hit video games like Mario 64. I've seen a few snaps of the screen and it looks great.

Secondly, the game is pretty much what you would expect. It's kind of a cross between a Tamagotchi and a fighting game. In the Japanese version, you start out with a single Digimon and have to raise him. From what I've heard, you either get a Gabumon or an Agumon, but again, that may change when it gets to the U.S.

Now, some of it is kinda sorta like Pokémon. That means, the Digimon follows a kid around a lot like Pika sometimes follows Ash. It's your job to take care of your

Digimon. That means giving him vitamins, food, and training.

Remember, the Digimon video is a Role Playing Game (RPG), and you have to explore the world as you play. As you stroll around the Digimon World, which is like a little town, you encounter the bad Digimon and some really bad guy bosses and collect items that you need. If your critter is up to the challenge, then you can fight when you encounter a bad guy. Remember, though, a Digimon starts off unevolved with very few attacks. It's your job to take care of him so that he'll evolve through his different levels, train him so that he can fight, and show him affection, so that he grows up confident. Also, the battles are much more detailed than in Pokémon for GameBoy.

Based on what I've seen and heard, Digimon World looks like a solid and fun game. Is it Pokémon? No, it's not Pokémon. That's not to say it's worse or better.

It just means that it's different. My advice is to rent *Digimon World* and play it for awhile, then see if it has the staying power that makes you want to buy it.

It's really hard to review a game that I haven't played. However, even if I haven't played it yet, I'll still shoot my mouth off. So, here's my official, never-played-the-game-myself review.

The folks who make *Digimon* really know what they are doing—remember, they invented the *Tamagotchi*. So, they have more experience with virtual pets than virtually anyone. That should count for something, right? Also, the *Digimon* anime is a very solid cartoon. The characters are interesting and the *Digimon* themselves are very cool. That should count for something too, if the game designers manage to bring the same quality to the game. And, lastly, PlayStation is a great system. That means you'll get a chance to see the *Digimon* in action with very, very good graphics.

MAX AND WILLY'S ACTION FIGURE ARENA

(Absolutely Guaranteed Non- Educational)

AS MANY OF YOU MAY KNOW, ACTION FIGURES have a very limited life span. Sure, they're made of plastic and in theory will last until the sun burns out and the last roach croaks its last bug breath on a desolate earth. However, billions and billions of years before that, you'll get bored with them. It's a fact. I know it. You know it. And if the action figures had brains, they'd know it, too.

Using complex mathematical formulas and high-speed super-computers I've calculated an action figure's playtime life span.

An action figure's life span of fun is roughly from the time you get it at the store, plus the time it takes for your best friend to say, "Hey, is that new? Cool!" plus two weeks, three days and five hours. Of course, this can be drastically shortened by such instances as your dog chewing the head off the action figure, loss of one or more of the accessory weapons . . . and, worst of all, your little sister dressing it up in doll clothes. I don't care how cool an action figure is, it's immediately less cool and much less fun the instant a little sister dresses it up for a pretend tea party.

Anyway, keeping all this in mind, I've gone to the experts—owners of several hundred thousand million action figures—to find out what they do with their plastic superheros once the fun wears off.

Willy's Green Tennis Ball of Ultimate Death Pitching Challenge

"I set up seven or eight of the figures on the front steps and practice my pitching. You start at the bottom step and work your way up from fifty feet away. It's helped my pitching a lot."

Max's Action Figure Bowling

"You set them up like bowling pins and use a soccer ball to bowl them down. The only bad part is setting them up again. It's a pain. Another way to do this inside, which is pretty good, is to set them up like bowling pins and run a remote-controlled car into them. I also set them up with my friends in different parts of

the room and see who can knock them down with a remote-controlled car faster. The trick is setting them up in weird ways, so that it's tough to knock them down."

Willy's Tracing/Drawing Trick

"Put an action figure down on a piece of paper and trace around it with a pencil or pen. Then you have an outline you can color in. This is a good trick for kids who like to draw or trace. It's good if you don't have a comic or picture to trace. Plus, you can put them down on paper in any pose you like, so it can be better than tracing a picture."

Max's Head, Hand and Arm Swap

"You have to get the same kind of action figures, but with some of them you can pull off the heads and hands and stuff and trade them on to other action figures."

Willy's Action Figure Ice Mold

"Hang an action figure with string in a big pan of water so that it is half in and half out of the water and so that he's facing down. Then put it in the freezer. When the water turns to ice, you can pull the action figure out to get an ice mold. You can fill the mold with melted ice pop. This is cool because you can pose the fig-

ure any way you want to get the shape pop you want."

Max's History Lesson

"I wanted to do a re-enactment of President Lincoln's assassination for school using Wolverine, Batman, and Superman. I didn't do it, but I think it's still a good idea. Wolverine would have been John Wilkes Booth and Superman would have been President Lincoln. Batman could have been Mrs. Lincoln."

. . . AND HERE'S SOME MORE ANIME YOU MAY LIKE

SINCE ANIME HAS BEEN POPULAR IN JAPAN for years and years and years, there is a bunch of it. There's a ton of it. And since it's only recently getting popular in the U.S., that means there's a lot of stuff that can be brought over to show on TV pretty quickly.

This is the way I think it worked. Only a few years ago not many people in the U.S. liked anime. A lot of these guys—yes, mostly guys—were older and discovered anime by reading comics and manga. Not much happened until Pokémon hit the TV

screens and Game Boys. Then, wham . . . anime explosion!

Someone somewhere said, "Hey, American kids like this stuff, too!"

I guess kids in Japan aren't that different from kids in the U.S. They all like exciting animated stories. So far, American kids have gotten really good anime. A lot of the shows that were big hits in Japan are now becoming big hits in the U.S., just like Pokémon.

So, if you liked Pokémon, Digimon, and the rest, here's some more shows and movies that you may also like.

Mobile Suit Gundam

Okay, if you liked *Star Wars*, then you'll probably like *Gundam Wing* or *Mobile Suit Gundam* . . . heck, you may even like the whole Gundam phenomenon. The show came out in America on The Cartoon Network just a few months ago and

already it's getting fans . . . a lot of them. Plus, there's a bunch of toys and trading cards and, yes, a video game.

Gundam Wing is a *mech* or *mecha* type anime, which means that the action is about mechanical stuff. The story takes place in the far future. People have already started building space colonies; in fact, space colonies are pretty popular. They are kinda like the suburbs of Earth. Space colonies were built because there just wasn't enough room on Earth.

However, just like the U.S. colonies when England was in charge, a bunch of people on the space colonies—called Sides—think that the rulers back on Earth are giving them a bad deal. The Earth rulers are not really that mean, but very unfair. There's a reason for this, but I won't spoil the show for you.

Now, here's where the Gundam part comes in. A gundam is a kind of robot suit. It's over 50 feet tall and looks like a monster. You put it on and you have

super-human strength, powers, and weapons. It's like stepping inside a robot, only you control the robot. If this sounds familiar, well, there have been a bunch of robot suit movies here in the U.S.

Anyway, the people on the space colonies have built a few of these suits and hope to use them to win their independence from Earth's rulers.

Most of the action takes place on the Earth and space colonies. However, there is also a lot of stuff that takes place on the moon and some of the other planets.

I know, putting on monster suits to fight evil sounds a bit silly—or cool—depending on how you look at it, but you should keep a couple of things in mind. For one thing, if you ever saw a suit of Japanese armor, it would look like a monster to you.

The second thing you should remember is that there really aren't any space monsters in this show. All of the characters are human.

The hero of the show is a teenager named Amuro Rei. (sometimes Rei is spelled Ray or Rey. All three ways are pronounced the same.) He's a typical kid, minding his own business, when the revolt breaks out on his home turf. Now he has to get involved. He puts on one of the Mobile Suits.

At first Amuro is not really good at working the suit. He has to look at the instructions. But as it turns out, he is what is called a NewType (sometimes spelled New Type—two words). This means he is naturally better at working the suit than anyone else—well, almost anyone else. His mortal enemy is Char Aznable, another NewType fighting for the other side.

If all that sounds pretty simple—well, it's not! Remember, the TV show ran for more than 20 years in Japan. Plus, there were movies released in the theaters and movies for the home. What all this means is that Gundam's plot is very complex.

Plus, there are a lot of "side stories," spin-offs. A spin-off occurs when a character that's really popular on one TV show suddenly has his own show. And believe me, Gundam had a lot of them.

Like a lot of anime, you can watch Gundam for different reasons. Yes, there are cool robot-type battles. However, some of the plots are very complex so you have to pay attention, even when Mobile Suits aren't fighting.

Mobile Suit Shows and Movies

Mobile Suit Gundam TV show

Char's Counterattack (full-length theater movie)

Gundam 0080 (also called *A War in the Pocket*) OAV

Gundam 0083 (also called *Stardust Memory*) OAV

SD Gundam (also called *Mobile Soldier*)
OAV

(Note: Remember "OAV" means Original Animation Video. That means it's a movie that was never shown in theaters. It's important to remember that some videos of anime are collections of the TV shows.)

A Note to Parents

At the present time *Gundam* is shown on television at two different time periods. The early show has been edited while the later show has not. For this reason, you may wish to preview any tapes that you have purchased or rented before your child views them. Rented tapes tend to be *unedited* versions of the shows or movies.

Sailor Moon

*"Nobody watches Sailor Moon.
It's a girl's show."*

—Willy

Uh, well, yes, it is a girl's show. But the fact of the matter is that millions and millions of kids, mostly girls, watch the show. Aside from Pokémon, it's probably one of the most popular anime shows in the world. It's been translated into a bunch of different languages and there are literally hundreds and hundreds of *Sailor Moon* websites out there in practically any language you can name. Girls love *Sailor Moon*.

Sailor Moon is not only an anime, but also full-length movies, a manga, graphic novels, toys, and ever other kid product you can imagine. Why is *Sailor Moon* so popular? Well, for one thing, it's cute. Oh

yeah, *Sailor Moon* is very cute. . . . cute, cute, cute.

The plot of *Sailor Moon* is pretty easy to follow once you get into the series. (By the way, the real translation of "Sailor Moon" from Japanese is "Pretty Soldier.") The real start of the story was 1,000 years ago when everything was happy. A good queen known as Queen Serenity ruled the universe from a palace on the moon, and people all over the universe were . . . well, really, really happy. Hey, but that couldn't last, right?

Okay, here come the bad guys. Another queen named Beryl is evil. She rules a place called the Negaverse (*Negative Universe*) where people are not all that happy. Her plan is to use a Negaforce to take over the Universe and make everyone miserable. That's what bad guys do.

There's a big war—which by guy standards is very boring—and the bad guys are about to win. Queen Serenity, using a magic crystal, sends her only daughter—

a princess—ahead in time to save her. The whole thing would end here, except that the bad guys follow the princess into the future to capture the crystal because they need it to conquer the universe.

The hero of the story is Sailor Moon—the princess—who is living in a present-day world. Her name is Serena and she is a typical teenager. She whines and cries and complains and is not always nice. Anyway, she gets a quest from a cat (happens every day, right?) and goes out to seek the Moon Princess. In her quest she is transformed into her secret identity as Sailor Moon—which wears a sailor suit. Also, she meets other “Scouts” who can help her on her quest.

There isn’t any violence in the series. Serena/Sailor Moon has to transform the world using love and kindness. She even has a sort of boyfriend who also can transform and help her.

If all this sounds kind of dopey, then you are probably a boy. I’m not saying

that boys can't like Sailor Moon (because a lot of them do like it), just that the series is absolutely adored by girls. And in the world of manga and anime in America, girls have very few shows of their own.

A Couple of Things You Should Know About Sailor Moon

First of all, you'll see the word "senshi" a lot in Sailor Moon stuff. Senshi means "scout," but some prefer the translation "soldier."

Another thing you'll notice is the incredible amount of detail that fans collect about the show and the characters. This is pretty common for anime and manga. This is also one of the things that make the shows pretty cool. You can find out as much about Serena/Sailor Moon as you want.

For instance, Serena's birthday is in June. Her favorite foods are cake and ice cream. Her favorite color is white. And

her least favorite subjects in school are English and math. And there's tons more to know about the characters.

It may sound silly having a cartoon character with all that detail, but for a lot of people it makes the shows more enjoyable.

Hey, That's Too Much Information!

In *Sailor Moon* and a couple other anime and manga, you'll notice that information about their blood type is listed. So what's up with that? Do you need to know their blood type in case they get into an accident?

Well, no. After all, anime and manga all have the same blood type—it's called ink! But in a lot of the fan stuff, you'll see Serena's blood type as being listed as O and other characters' as B type. These are real blood types that exist in actual people. So why list them for cartoon characters? Well, a few years ago some people

in Japan believed that a person's blood type could tell you things about their personalities. It was kind of like astrology. I don't know how many people believed it for real—just as I don't know how many people believe astrology for real—but it is kind of a fun thing, if you don't take it too seriously.

Speed Racer

Back several thousand million years ago—when I was a kid—anime was anime. It was better. It was faster. It was . . . on black and white television sets and we didn't know what the heck we were watching. We'd sit around the TV and say, "What the heck is that?" My mother was always good about explaining stuff like that. She'd walk into the room and say, "You've got to turn the TV set on first, then you can watch the pictures." Hey, for years we thought we were pretty

cool, watching TV. Nobody told us you had to turn it on. People would come up and say, "So, what'd you do last night?"

And I'd answer, "Watch TV . . ."

"Anything good?"

"Naw, it was boring."

Once I actually started turning the TV on, well, it got a lot more interesting.

Anyway, the first time I heard about an anime was in the fourth grade when this weird kid, Mickey, drew car wheels and windows on his square pink eraser, threw it at the back of my head and yelled, "Speed Eraser!" (Author note: Mickey, if you're reading this, I haven't forgotten about that eraser thing. I'm gonna get back you for that and I don't care if it takes me a million years.)

By that time I'd been actually turning on the TV for a couple weeks and had an idea it was a television show. Speed Eraser? That sounded weird. So, I tuned in, and that's when I found out it wasn't

Speed Eraser, but *Speed Racer*. There's a difference. A big difference.

Now back then we didn't know the shows were called anime. We didn't even know they were from Japan. We just thought they were weird-looking shows, but pretty exciting too.

Speed Racer is about a teenage race car driver who drives the famous Mach 5 race car. Speed's ambition is to be the best race car driver in the world—sort of like a Jeff Gordon, if Jeff Gordon had really big eyes and a pet monkey.

His pit crew is made up of his father, who designed the Mach 5; his little brother, Spridle; and, of course, his pet monkey, Chim-Chim.

There's also a mystery. Nobody knows who Racer X is, but he seems to turn up at all of Speed's races. Speed also has a girlfriend, Trixie, who travels around in a helicopter.

I know, some of this stuff may sound a

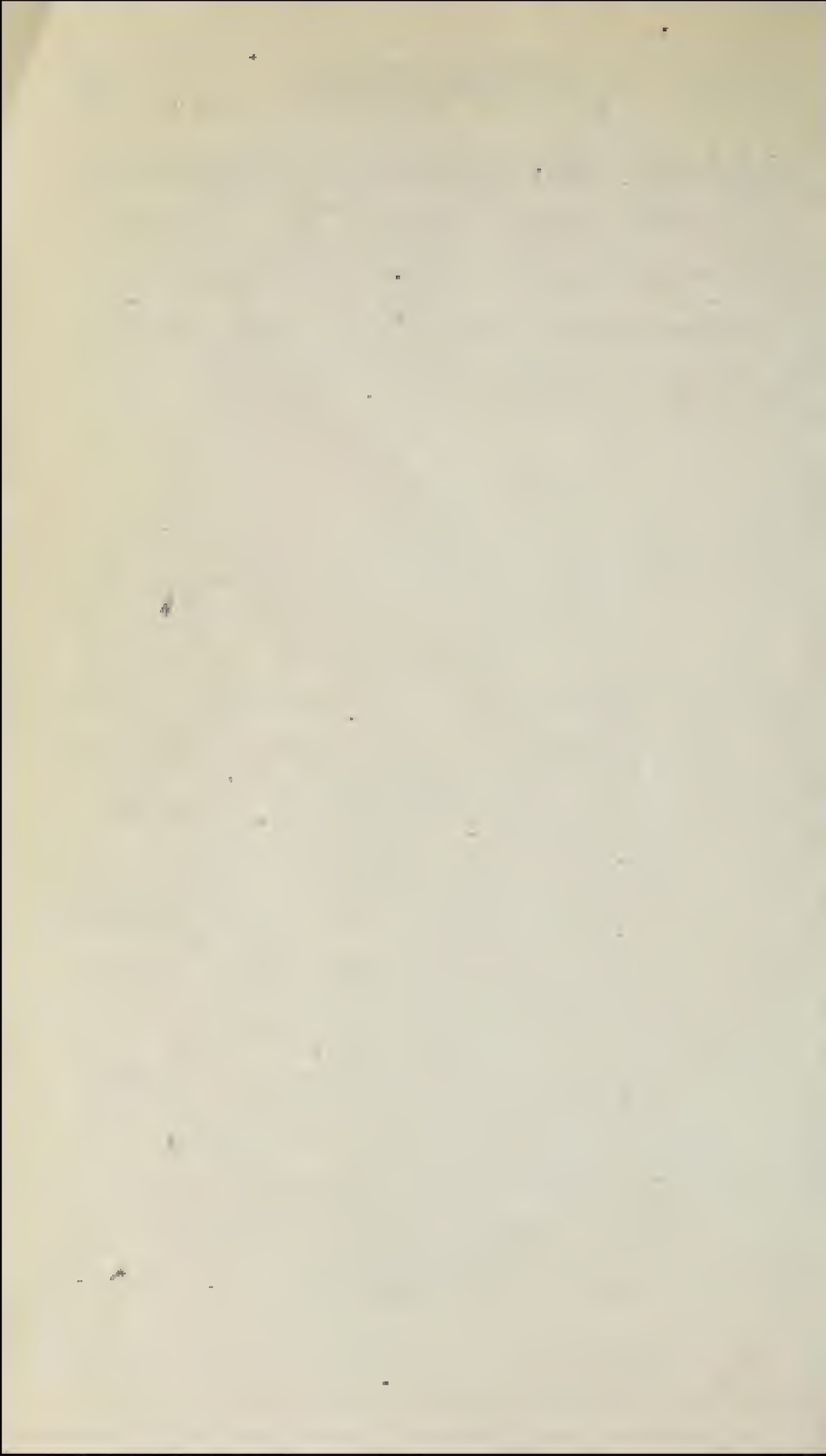
little strange, but it was really hot stuff when I was a kid. It's still pretty good. Plus, it's one of the few animes you could probably watch with your parents because they might remember it from when they were kids.

Kiki's Delivery Service

If you like the TV show *Sabrina The Teenage Witch* and the Harry Potter books, then you'll like this anime. It's about Kiki, a thirteen-year-old witch who has to leave home to complete her witch training. She soon finds a new home for herself and her cat, Jiji, and becomes friends with a local boy named Tombo. Her new job turns out to be making deliveries. Naturally, she makes the deliveries flying on her broom and has one adventure after another as she completes her witch training.

This movie was a hit—a really big hit—

in Japan. And when they brought it to the U.S., they had huge stars do the voices. These stars included Kirsten Dunst, Matthew Lawrence, Debbie Reynolds, and Janeane Garofalo.



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH AND TOO MUCH IS . . . BAD

I'LL TELL YOU A SECRET . . . A LOT OF PARENTS really hated Pokémon. Okay, maybe it's not a secret. But do you know why they hated it?

They hated it because it was too much. Kids talked about it too much. They played the game too much. And there were too many arguments about stupid things like trading the cards. A lot of schools around the country banned the cards, even at lunch and recess, because they were so much trouble.

In Japan, someone who is a really, really big fan of a manga or anime and who can't

talk about anything else is called a "Otaku" (Oh-Tac-Koo). It's kind of an insulting thing to call someone. It means that they don't have anything else to do but watch anime and read manga and do stuff related to anime and manga.

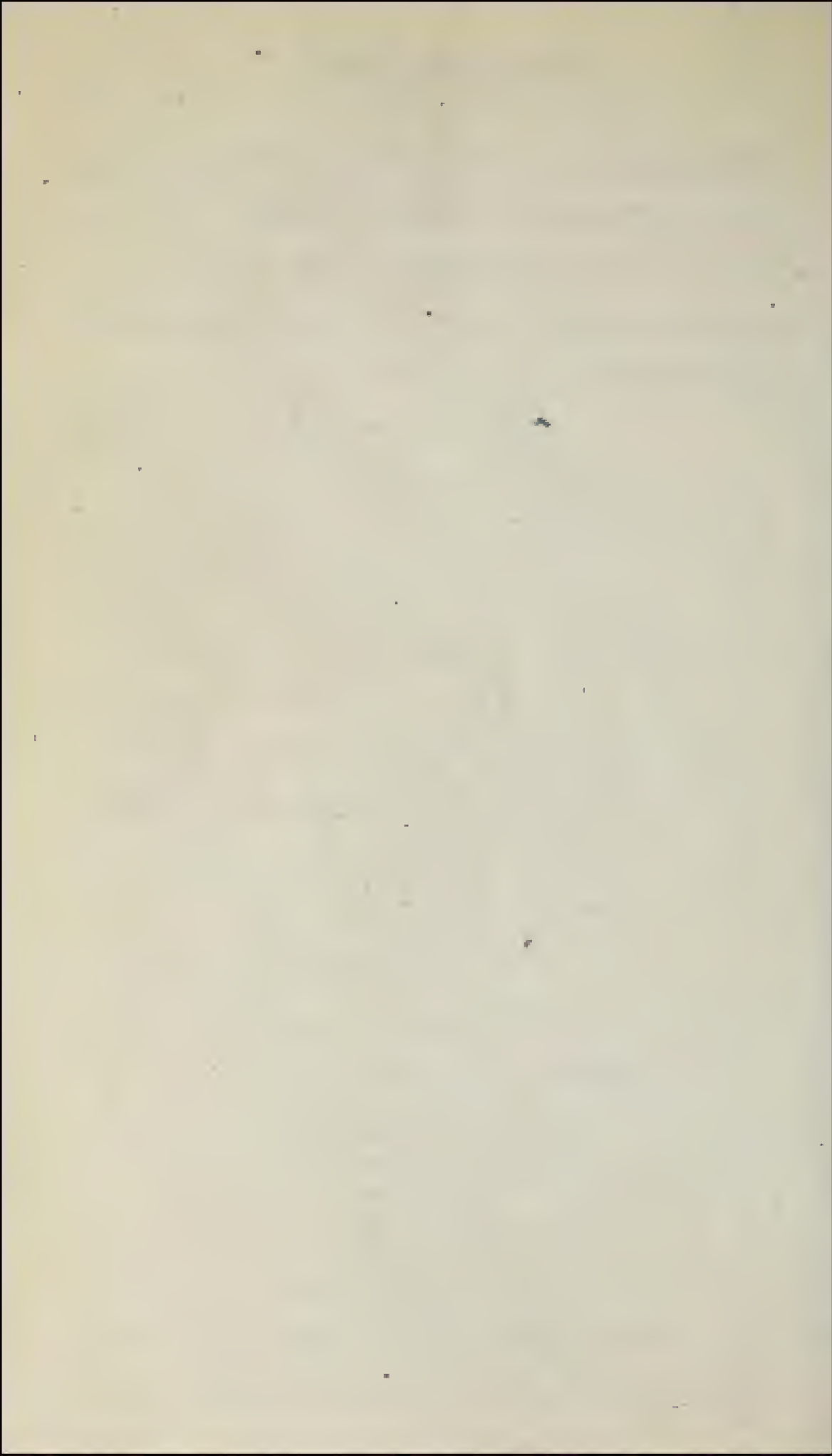
Too much of anything, even great TV shows, movies, trading cards and action figures, is bad. And when a hobby gets in the way of schoolwork or household chores, then that's really bad.

There's only about three things to remember when it comes to video games, anime and manga. They are:

- A)** Be considerate of others.
- B)** Don't let it get in the way of really important stuff, like schoolwork.
- C)** Don't let it get in the way of other fun things, like sports or family activities.

That school thing is really important to remember because in a few years it really won't matter how many Pokémon cards

you collected or how far you got in the game. However, whether or not you can do long division and find the noun in a sentence will matter a great deal. Trust me on this.



THE END

THAT'S THE END OF THE BOOK. I HOPED you liked it. . . . Now if you will excuse me, I have to go do important writer things. I'm a busy guy.

What? You're still here? Why? The book is over. Why are you still reading. Stop it! I said stop reading now! Come on, the book is over, don't you have anything better to do? Stop reading. I said stop reading!

Aw c'mon, please. . . . please stop reading. This isn't funny anymore. I'm not going to write anything else about Digimon or Pokémon or Dragonball. You're not

going to learn anything new. You are just wasting time reading this stuff.

Oh yeah, real funny, right? I bet you think you're real smart the way you keep reading this stuff. I bet I could write anything and you'd keep reading, even though the book is officially over. That's right, it's over. Finished . . .

The End

Hey, I already wrote "The End." Why are you still reading? C'mon, the book's over. Go read something else! Geesh, kids today!

MASTER TODAY'S MOST AMAZING GAME!

The hottest new craze in monster games is DigiMon—short for Digital Monsters. Players must hatch, raise, and train their DigiMon in order to battle with other DigiMon—and that's when the fun begins. The ultimate guide to this awesome game, **DIGIMON POWER**, in detailed, kid-friendly language, gives readers:

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- ◆ In-depth monster facts, plus the coolest hints, tips, tricks, and secrets from kids just like you
- ◆ An exciting look at Japanese cartoon-anime, and television shows we might see in the future
- ◆ Hot info about other monster games, trading cards, and shows, like Tamagotchi, Pokémon, and Monster Rancher
- ◆ ***And much, much more!***

DIGIMON POWER

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